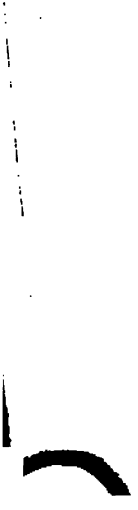

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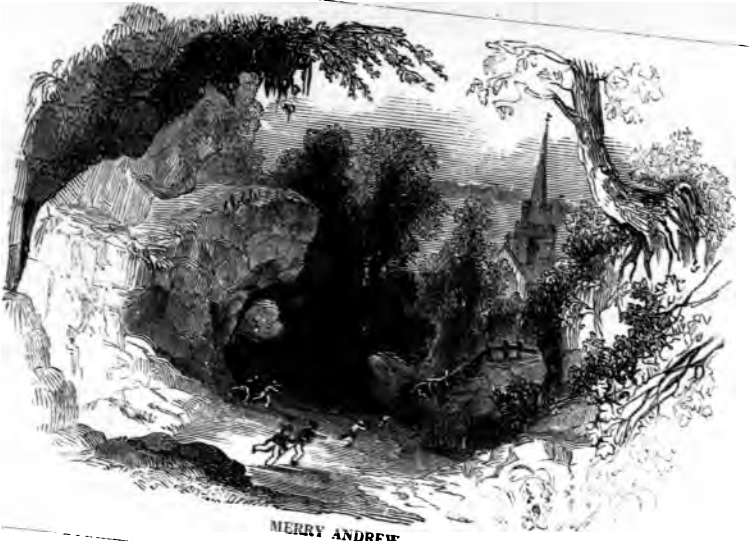
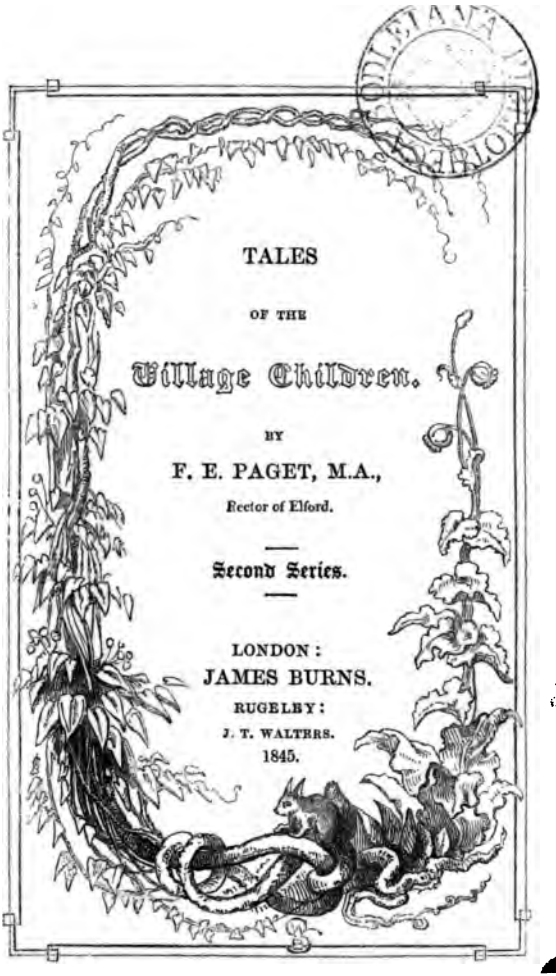


MERRY ANDREW.



TALES

OF THE

Village Children.

BY

F. E. PAGET, M.A.,

Rector of Elford.

Second Series.

LONDON:
JAMES BURNS.
RUGELBY:
J. T. WALTERS.
1845.

PREFACE.

THE present volume is intended for the use of readers a year or two older than those for whom the first of the series was written; and, in putting it forth, the Author desires to say a few words in anticipation of certain very obvious criticisms, which may be made with respect to it.

It may be said, first, that the Conversations are above the capacity of the common run of boys in our village schools; and, secondly, that boys never did and never will talk as they are represented to have done in the ensuing tales.

Now the first objection is granted; for it is to be feared that the state of education in some of the agricultural districts is lamentably defective, and the children are often in a condition the most stolid and ignorant imaginable: but then, on the other hand, there is good evidence to shew that in this respect we are improving daily, and the writer is sanguine in the hope that before long such subjects as those discussed in this little book, will not be "too hard" for children in *any* of our national schools. Certainly they *ought* not to be too hard for those who are properly educated as children of the Church.

If, however, it be said that the subjects in question might have been made more *easy*, the author is quite ready to admit the fact; but it is his deliberate opinion, that what is called "writing down to the intellects of children," is a very absurd and mischievous process; and, moreover, that it is one which is wholly unnecessary. Provided a writer's *language* be clear and simple, and the vocabulary that with which they are familiar, it is by no means difficult to lead the minds of children to the apprehension of things which are commonly supposed to be above them. The truth is, as has been

wisely observed, that "Children are distinguished from ourselves, less by an *inferiority* than by a *difference* in capacity, — that the barriers between manhood and childhood are marked less by the progress of every power than by the exchange of many." Children are as capable of understanding deep things as adults; in some respects, more so; for, generally speaking, they have less of the mists of sin and worldly prejudice interposed between their eyes and the light. In ordinary cases the difficulty is not in the idea, but in the language which attempts to convey it. Many things are *above* a child which are not *beyond* him; and it is a wholesome exercise for his intellect when he can be voluntarily induced to grapple with these; but he will invariably shrink from the task, when, in addition to other difficulties, he has to master those arising from "hard words," and a vocabulary with which he is *not* familiar. Interest him with a subject generally, express yourself in language he will understand, and you have made it worth his while to master the difficulties of particular passages. The proof of this is, that, as on the one hand, no child loves a *childish* book, (i. e., a volume of trumpery, mawkish twaddle, which any simpleton

can comprehend,) so, on the other, every child is glad to peep into his parents' books, and will appropriate to himself the first odd volume of Shakespeare or Addison, on which he can lay his hand.

The writer being strongly impressed with these views, has endeavoured to use, as much as possible, the *language* of childhood, while he has been less careful to avoid the introduction of what by many will be considered too hard passages for children.

The other point to which he would allude is this. It will be objected, that, such conversations as he has recorded, are not upon the kind of subjects on which children are apt to converse. This, too, he admits. *Every* speaker, in *every* tale, be the subject what it may, talks more or less unnaturally; he goes upon stilts. The writer has no hope of succeeding, where so many mighty masters have failed, and, therefore, he confesses at once that he has endeavoured to make his boys talk, not as the majority of boys *do* talk at present, but as as a few sober-minded, well-educated boys, here and there, *might* talk, if the Church was in a condition to do justice to all her children. When

boys are taught what Church principles are, and to appreciate Church privileges, and to form their characters, and discipline their minds by Church rules, then we may hope that they will think and speak as Churchmen, and that it will be no unusual thing for them to discuss among themselves what those duties are which the Church calls on them to fulfil.

Elford Rectory,
ALL SAINTS. 1844.

THE TOLL HOUSE. Page 10.

MERRY ANDREW.

Part I.

It has pleased God, for His own wise purposes, to endow us, His creatures, whom He sends into the world, with all manner of different talents and tempers, even as He places us in various ranks, conditions, and circumstances of life. Some are born among heathen nations; others among Christian people. Some are born to riches; others to poverty.

But these differences are not greater, or so great, as those which are to be found in the dispositions exhibited in the hearts and minds of men, and in the tastes and qualities which are natural to them. Some are dull, and some are clever; some love study, and others dislike it. Some enjoy reading; others would never take up a book if they could help it. Some are greedy, some generous. Some quiet, some noisy and high-spirited. Some good-natured, some hasty and ready to take offence. Some are grave and thoughtful; others are childish, thoughtless, and merry-hearted, loving laughter better than anything else, and always ready to look at things on the bright side, as it is called.

Now, these different dispositions of ours are the materials, as it were, upon which religion has to work; or, in other words, it is our business to train and discipline the qualities with which we are endowed, in such a manner as that each should hold just that place, in our respective characters, which it *ought* to hold in a religious man. If a person is naturally clever, for instance, or generous,

he has nothing to be proud of: these qualities are as much *a gift* as the eyes in his head, or the fingers on his hands: he must, therefore, be thankful for them; and look about and ascertain in what points he has deficiencies, and endeavour to make up, by acquirement, for what was not naturally bestowed. Again, another person is, by nature, disinclined to study and slow to learn, or he may be greedy, or impatient. But, *unless he gives way to these infirmities*, he is not more to be blamed for them, than for being deaf or blind. He comes into the world with the qualities with which God endowed him: and for the use or abuse of them he is answerable. His trial is to turn his natural advantages to the best account, and to use his earnest endeavour to make up for his disadvantages, so as to render himself subject, in all things, to the law of God, and make himself a good man on all points.

And if he will submit himself to be guided by religion, this will be gradually done for him; *religion will mould him to her holy purposes;* she will give him strength where he

is weak, tame him down where he is inclined to rebel, fill up what is defective, and root out what is amiss. "It would seem at first sight impossible," as it has been strikingly said, "that weak children and delicate women could have strength enough to embrace the pains of the Cross. They will surely turn away from the first taste of bitterness in the cup it offers, or faint at the sight of the fearful shadows which fall on its path. Yet the All-Merciful teaches the shorn lamb to abide the blast; and this very weakness, when supported by Divine love, becomes most strong. Christianity knows no difference of sex; in it there is 'neither male nor female;' because *there is but one character to which all must conform, one likeness which all must imitate;* and from it man must learn all the gentleness and tenderness of woman, and woman must learn all the strength and severity of man. Many holy saints have persevered unto the end, who have brought an innocent light-hearted gaiety, and weakness, like the bending reed, to learn its sorrows. They find it hard, like S. Thomas, to believe its awful realities, and scarcely

guess beforehand the pain they must go through; yet, when it is understood, they receive it readily and with all their heart."

My young reader will think this a long extract, and that my story has but a dull beginning. If, however, he will be patient, I hope he will find that I improve, as I go on, though I have reversed the order usually adopted by story-tellers, by putting the moral at the beginning, instead of at the end of my tale.

There were few persons at Yateshull who had experienced more troubles than Rebecca Jolliffe,—Widow Jolliffe as we usually called her. Her husband had been a small farmer, but he was unfortunate in business, for he was of an indolent, reckless temper; so he became bankrupt; then he took to drinking, in order to stupify, so far as he could, his conscience. This, however, only made matters worse; he grew poorer and poorer—more and more miserable, both in body and mind, and, after a few years, died in the prime of life, leaving a widow and five or six young children wholly unprovided for.

Rebecca had hard work to get her living; but she found kind friends, and was very pains-taking and industrious, and so contrived to maintain her family till her children were able to do something for themselves. But by this time a new trial was awaiting her. Her late husband had died of consumption, and it pleased God that her children should have the same fatal complaint bound up with their natural constitutions. Accordingly, as each grew up to manhood or womanhood, they fell sick, and pined, and languished, and died. Her eldest son, indeed, lived long enough to marry, and to have a little boy of his own; but he, too, became a prey to the disease before he was five and twenty, and he is the last of seven who lie, side by side, in the south-western corner of our church-yard.

All these accumulated sorrows and expenses nearly wore out the poor broken-hearted widow: her health failed her, and from being a robust, active woman, she gradually passed into a pale, thin, sickly, feeble invalid, whom every breath of cold air seemed to affect, and whom every sound seemed to startle and dis-

tract. What but the comforts of religion, and habitual attendance on the ordinances of the Church, could have supported her under so many afflictive dispensations? What indeed! But she knew in Whom she had believed. In the midst of the sorrows which she had in her heart, His comforts had refreshed her soul. She had learned to value the privilege and glory of being allowed to bear a portion of her Saviour's cross. She received her trials as tokens of His hand, and as messages sent from Him. And she had found that His Church was a home for the lonely; "a tabernacle for a shadow in the day-time from the heat, and for a place of refuge, and for a covert from storm, and from rain,"—"a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress."

There are people in the world who think they can do without religion; or, that at any rate, they can do without it till they are in years, or in sorrow, or in sickness, and that *then* it will come to them, and bring its comforts as a matter of course. But such persons are miserably deceived. And if Rebecca Jolliffe

had been one of them she would have found herself, in the evil day, without anything that could support her in her difficulties, and carry her through her temptations. Happily for her, she had remembered her Creator in the days of her youth, and in the days of her trouble, and poverty, and sickness, He did not forget her. He did not remove His chastening hand from her; but He gave her grace to acknowledge in it the evidence of His love and mercy. He did not cease to afflict her; but He gave her strength to bear her afflictions: and taught her, by her own actual experience, that although "no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby."

Hence it fell out that while in the eyes of her neighbours Becky Jolliffe was much to be pitied for being, as indeed she was, very poor, very lonesome, and very weakly,—she had, all the while, sources of comfort, of which some of them knew little, and her treasure being laid up securely in heaven, she felt the want

of it less while on earth. Making allowance for the infirmities of human nature, I do believe that Widow Jolliffe was as good a woman as is often to be found, though she herself was, probably, not in the least aware that she was more religious than those around her, and her neighbours thought little more about her than that she was "a poor inoffensive creature, who was never out of one trouble before she was in another."

Such was the person, who, at the time my tale begins, was, half in fear and half in joy, about to undertake the charge of a noisy little urchin, her orphan grandson; who, as she not unnaturally expected, would be the plague and the pride of her life, a continual source of anxiety, but, at the same time, an object of interest and affection.

Time had been when Widow Jolliffe occupied as good a house as any body in Yateshull; but as her family decreased in number, and her worldly means became more and more straitened, she was glad to go where the rent was lowest; and eventually occupied a tenement which was little better than a hovel by

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the road side. Some years before, the trustees of the turnpike road had set up a toll-gate at one end of the parish, but finding that it brought them very little profit, they, after a while, took the gate away, and were content to let the toll-house for a few shillings yearly. It was a very humble dwelling, consisting of two small rooms, but it was pleasantly situated at the foot of a sunny bank; there were two or three fine horse-chesnuts and elms in the adjoining hedge-row, and from the windows there was a cheerful view of the bridge and winding river, and of the rich meadows beyond.

It is wonderful what care and neatness will do for even the most unpromising spots: no wonder, therefore, that under the tenancy of Becky Jolliffe, the toll-house became quite a pretty feature at the entrance of the village. A china rose and a honey-suckle were taught to climb up its clean white-washed walls: the most was made of the few square yards of garden which had been railed off from the road-side; the vegetables seemed to flourish exceedingly; and in a oblong bed, bordered

with double daisies, which lay on the right of the door, there was a handsome bush of sweet briar, some patches of marygold and London-pride, a tussock or two of pinks, and some double stocks and double wall-flowers, which it did one's heart good to look upon.

As for the inside of the cottage it was a model of a neat and tidy housewife's abode. Becky Jolliffe evidently agreed with the old proverb, which says that "Cleanliness is next to godliness." The rooms were small, and the furniture was very poor and homely, but every thing was in its right place, and put to its proper use; there were no dark corners, so often the receptacles of dirt, and the excuses of laziness; no grease-spots on the sanded floor; no unwiped slop-marks on the well-scoured deal table. No rust dimmed the lustre of the Dutch oven, and the tin candle-stick. No dust hung upon the dishes on the shelf. The latticed windows had no weather-stains to obscure the light; nay, the geranium, in the window, had its leaves as clean and healthy as though it had flourished through the winter, in a rich man's greenhouse.

Some people thought that Becky Jolliffe was a great deal too particular. Well, perhaps she was: it is difficult not to run into extremes. And if the truth must be confessed, she had given more than one sigh at the thought of the pack of troubles into which she should be thrown when her expected guest should come, and, in his childish play, turn her house into disorder. Every body has their weaknesses: happy they, who by constant habits of self-examination become aware of them, and so check them before they grow to sinful habits. Martha, the sister of Lazarus, was only doing what was right when she occupied herself in the duties of her household: but when she allowed her domestic cares to get too strong a hold upon her, and was so cumbered with serving, that she could not find time to sit at Jesus' feet and hear His word, as her sister Mary had done, she drew on herself the well-deserved rebuke, "Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things. But one thing is needful, and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her."

In due time little Andrew Jolliffe made his appearance. The mother, upon her husband's death, had left Yateshull to go and live with her own relations, and she survived him about six years, so that Widow Jolliffe had not seen her grandson since he was an infant. A proud and happy woman was she when the Derby Carrier stopped at her door, and deposited Andrew and his little box of clothes. How she laughed, and wept, and kissed the child by turns! and how glad the little fellow seemed to be, to escape from the confinement of the covered cart, and to caper about his kind old grandmother. No child could look in Becky's face and be shy; but shyness was a quality which seemed to have been altogether left out of Andrew's disposition. He was too full of high spirits to be shy; or if the presence of strangers now and then disconcerted him, his drooping head was soon raised, and a sly peep from the corner of his eye shewed that he only wanted a word of encouragement to be quite at ease again. A merry, light-hearted creature was he, with laughing blue eyes, and a mouth that seemed

ever ready for a grin: full of fun and frolic, happy as the day was long, and best pleased when he could make others as gay as himself.

"You must look sharp after that young one, Mistress," said the carrier, with a smile, "or he will be one too many for you! What a merry little monkey he is sure-*ly!* and what a tongue he has! I was almost afeard he would talk my horse's hind leg off!"

This was alarming news to a nervous, sickly old woman. Becky's fears returned, but her glance of dismay was turned into one of pleasure as she looked on the little boy's face, and traced there the well-remembered lineaments of her own son's features, as they had appeared at the same age.

The carrier drove away; and Andrew and his grandmother entered the cottage. Becky had so many questions to ask, and all he saw was so new to Andrew, that the evening passed very pleasantly; and, in the course of it, the little boy contrived to make himself so useful, that his grandmother began to think that she should find great comfort in him. And so she did. Andrew was by no means a

spoilt child. He was not rude, or disobedient, or wilful; he was only thoughtless, and rather too noisy. But then, on the other hand, he was full of affection, quite unselfish, very truthful, and anxious to do what he was bid, and to please his grandmother.

How could he tell that Becky did not like him to put her chair in harness, and sit upon the table, and drive his wooden horse, and flourish a stick over his head, to the eminent peril of the crockery, and the alarm of his grandmother? He had always been allowed to do so at home: nobody there had been frightened.

"I'm sure I'm very sorry, Granny," said he, looking very red. "I did not know you would not like it."

And thus having made his apology, and not quite knowing what to do next, he began to whistle.

"Don't whistle, there's a dear!" exclaimed Becky, "it quite goes through my head, and all down my back."

Andrew stopped immediately, but continued the tune with his heels on the floor.

Becky gave a melancholy kind of a groan, much as she might have done had she been told that she never was to be quiet again.

The boy looked up. "Are you *very* bad, Granny ?"

"No, love; but that noise of your's worrits me. Wouldn't you like to go out of doors, and play there ?"

Andrew was too happy. Up he started, and was out of the cottage in a moment.

"Stay, stay," cried the old lady, as she saw him making the best of his way to the bridge and the river. "For goodness sake dont go there; the river is very deep. You'll certainly tumble in and be drowned. Keep in the garden, that's a good boy."

Andrew looked rather vexed, but came back at once. Becky re-entered her cottage, and shut the door. "Now," thought she, "I shall have a little peace. Dear! dear! my poor nerves! what a flurry I am in. My poor legs! how they do but tremble. Certainly I am growing very weak; that boy is too much for me already."

But the expected quiet did not last long.

How could it? It was dull work to stand at the gate of the garden and look up and down a road along which nothing was passing, and the garden itself had nothing in it which was very attractive to Andrew. The gooseberries were not ripe, and he soon got tired of watching the bee-hive. However, there was a broken broom-stick lying against the wall: there was some comfort for him in that. It would do for a horse; and when he was tired of cantering round the flower-bed, it did for a sword. And then Andrew thought what a famous soldier he should make some day, and how vigorously he would use his weapon. And thereupon he made a strenuous onslaught on his grandmother's door, banging away with all his might, and shouting as loud as he could the well-known rhyme,—

"Hub a dub dub,
Three men in a tub;
And who do you think they be?
The butcher, the baker,
The candlestick-maker,
Turn 'em out, knaves all three! Hub a dub dub!
Hub a dub dub!"

"Oh dear, dear! I really shall go quite

distracted with this child's noise and racket!" thought poor Becky to herself; then opening the door; "Andrew my dear, you *must* be quiet; you should have remembered what I said to you, and not made such a to-do."

"You did not tell me that I mustn't make a noise out of doors, Granny," answered the child, "I won't do so where you can hear me."

"Good boy," replied Widow Jolliffe; "but remember you must not go anywhere where I can *not* hear you."

Andrew looked dismayed, but said nothing. Becky re-entered her cottage once more, and sat down to her knitting. The needles rapidly glided along under her skilful fingers, and she became more soothed as each fresh row was finished. But widow Jolliffe had an anxious temper. She was like a hen who had hatched a duck's egg. Andrew remained quiet, so she thought within herself, "Children will be children; they will be troublesome sometimes; but what a comfort it is to have to do with one who is obedient!"—Five minutes more passed away. "How *very* quiet

the boy is; quite remarkable for one of his age, I declare!"—Another five minutes elapsed. "So quiet I can't hear him. I hope to goodness he's not in mischief," exclaimed Becky, and once more put her head out of the door.

No wonder Andrew was quiet: there he sat in the middle of the path, as busy as the bees behind him, and as happy as a prince. He was making dirt-pies, and had formed a very fair top-crust of red marl to his pebble-fruits. The state of his hands and pinafore may, therefore, be easily imagined.

Becky was in despair. But, by the time she had made the little boy tidy again, and re-established the neatness of her walk, she had reflected within herself that she was expecting a great deal too much of her little charge, and that it was neither fair by him, nor good for him, to check the flow of his spirits so far as to fit him for companionship with her. "It is all very well," thought she, "that he should feel that at certain times he *must* be quiet, and that at all times he should consider me rather than himself; but I must not restrain and keep him in too closely. If

his spirits are too high at times, he will soon have trials enough to tame them. If he is to make his way in the world, he will have need of all he has, and of more. He shall go to school on Monday, and then I shall have quiet during his school-hours, and shall mind his noise less when he is at home."

If it was a relief to Widow Jolliffe to send her grandson to school, it was no less a pleasure to Andrew to go there. He was very anxious to please his grandmother, but he found it difficult to remember not to be noisy, and therefore he was glad to go where, in his play-hours, he might make as much noise as he pleased.

A happy boy was Andrew at school, and a great favourite with his companions. At first he was rather scared and shy; he was not used to such a number of play-fellows, or to so large a room as the school. And he had heard that Mr. Dilwyn was very strict (as indeed he was), and he did not immediately understand how a strict master could be a very kind one. And then, again, he was afraid of the sound of his own voice, and too

timid to speak out. But in a very short time all these uncomfortable feelings left him, and he began to be quite at his ease.

Of course, having so lately come to Yateshull, he did not know many of the boys, but he soon made friends with those in his own class, and, by degrees, he was taken notice of by the rest, for they speedily found out that he was a good-humoured little fellow. So Andrew's days passed happily along; and though he would occasionally get into such high spirits that a cry came at some trifle or other before bed-time, yet, I suppose, few boys were ever more gay and light-hearted than he.

As he grew up a bigger boy, he was more thought about by his companions; what he said and did was more observed by them; and, in proportion as they knew him better, they liked him better.

"He is so good-natured," said one.

"So ready to give up his own wishes," said another.

"He makes me laugh so," observed a third.

"He is so full of his nonsense," cried a fourth.

And so he was. If ever you met a crowd of boys in high glee, Andrew was sure to be among them. If a louder laugh than usual was heard in the play-ground, you might be certain that Andrew was the cause of it. If a good joke passed from one mouth to another, you might know beforehand that Andrew had something to do with it. And so, partly in allusion to his own light-heartedness, partly upon recollection of the mountebank whom some of the boys had seen at last year's Amworth Fair, and who had gone by the same name, his companions bestowed upon little Jolliffe the nickname of *Merry Andrew.*

Nicknames are always bad and foolish things; not rarely cruel and wicked ones. It is to be feared that boys at school will sometimes nickname a companion in consequence of some personal defect, such as lameness, or squinting, thus doing all in their power to add to the sharpness of the trial which God has sent him. Such hard-heartedness, however, and want of feeling are so shocking, that it is to be hoped that they seldom occur.

More frequently boys nickname each other out of a mischievous and teazing spirit, or to show their own cleverness in hitting off some appellation which will raise a laugh against the person to whom it is applied. But even this is very wrong and ill-natured. Why should we do to others what we should dislike to have done to ourselves? Why should we allow ourselves to find pleasure in what gives pain to others? It may be very silly in a boy to be vexed and angry at some epithet which has been put upon him in jest (and such an one will do well to remember, that the more vexed and angry he shews himself to be, the more sure is the epithet to stick by him), but we should recollect that, as Christians, we have no business to vex or anger one another.

But there are some nicknames which are intended (as in Andrew's case,) for compliments, and which are not given for the purpose of teazing the person to whom they are applied. Yet these, are quite as objectionable, though upon another ground. A boy who gets such a nickname as Andrew did, becomes vain of it, takes a kind of pride in it,

and so feels himself bound, as it were, to live up to his nickname. Andrew got the epithet of Merry, and so he persuaded himself that it behoved him to keep up his character for mirth, whether in season, or out of season. Having originally made his companions laugh without caring whether he did so or not, he by and bye got into the way of thinking that it was his business to make people laugh ; and so, rather than say nothing, he would now and then say things which had been much better left unsaid. He became vain of having his remarks repeated, and so was continually straining and making an effort to attract attention, and keep up his notoriety. His high spirits were often *put on* for effect, and his apparently thoughtless manner, the result of thought.

So that this nick-name, which happened to please him, did him more real injury than if it had pained him ; and though he got on at school as fast as clever boys usually do, he found himself, not unfrequently, reproved by Mr. Dilwyn, for not making greater progress. "You are much quicker than many of my scholars," the master used to say, "and there-

fore you ought, by this time, to be very far in advance of them; but you are so fond of amusing yourself, or others, that you are growing to dislike hard work, and any serious business; and, consequently, your quickness is a misfortune to you. It only encourages you in idleness. If you were a duller boy, I should have much more hope of you, because then you would be forced to take pains. But remember this, that your quickness is a talent which has been given you by God, and He will judge you very strictly hereafter, for the abuse of any good gift with which He has entrusted you."

Such admonitions as these had the effect of making Andrew more diligent and quiet for the time; but, before long, he was sure to fall back again into his thoughtless, self-indulgent ways. There was much that was good in his disposition; but he needed trials, in order that what was evil in him might be sifted from what was more hopeful. And in His own good time and way, God sent him the chastisements he needed. But for a considerable period after he came to Yates-

hull, the little boy went on in the unsatisfactory manner which has been described.

Andrew had been at school somewhat more than four years, when, one day at the close of the summer, Mr. Warlingham, looking over the Register of Attendance, saw his name set down as being absent without leave.

"How is this? Mr. Dilwyn," asked the Vicar, "Why is Jolliffe absent?"

Mr. Dilwyn shook his head, while a smile passed over his face. "All I know about him, sir, I have heard from his friend, Robert Kennedy, who, I fancy, has been his fellow-sufferer. Stand up, and shew yourself, Kennedy."

"Why, what has happened to you, Kennedy?" asked Mr. Warlingham. "What has brought your face into such a condition? one eye closed, and your nose swollen to three times the usual size!"

"Please sir," answered Kennedy, "it was the wapses; we were taking wapses' nesses, and so got stung."

"I wish you would learn to talk English,"

said Mr. Warlingham. "How do you spell those two words which you have called 'wapses' and 'nesses'?"

Kennedy spelt them, "W, a, s, p, s," and "N, e, s, t, s."

"Why don't you pronounce your words properly?"

"Please, sir, so I should, if I were reading; but I thought it didn't matter when I was talking. We call them 'wapses' and 'nesses' among ourselves."

"Then, if I were you," replied Mr. Warlingham, laughing, "I would do so no longer. But now let me hear about your 'wapses' nesses,' and how you and Jolliffe came to be stung; for that, I suppose, is the cause of his absence."

"If you please, sir," said Kennedy, "there are a great many wasps this year—"

"No, Kennedy, it doesn't please me at all," observed Mr. Warlingham, continuing to smile; "for they eat up all my fruit. But go on; I do not mean to interrupt you."

"Well, sir, there being so many wasps, Mr. Bower, the gardener at the hall, has

offered a reward of sixpence a nest, and his men have been destroying them, by putting brimstone into their holes, and suffocating them; and Merry and I—"

"Who?" asked Mr. Warlingham.

"Andrew Jolliffe, sir; we call him Merry Andrew, or Merry, for short. Andrew and I have been out with the garden-men every night till the night before last; and then Andrew said he did not see why we should not set up for ourselves. So, as we had no brimstone, we thought we would try and take a nest by day."

"And how did you set about that?" asked Mr. Warlingham.

"Andrew took his grandmother's tea-kettle, and he agreed to pour the boiling water into the hole; while Dick Middleton and I were to beat the wasps away with boughs."

"And, I suppose, Kennedy, you soon found they were too many for you?"

"Yes, sir, as soon as Dick Middleton heard them buzzing about his head, he took to his heels, and ran away. Merry and I stayed till

they began to come out of the hole by hundreds, and then he ran away too; but they followed us, and stung me as you see, sir; and, as for Merry, they have closed up both his eyes, and so his grandmother said it was no use sending him to school to-day."

"Well, Kennedy, you will not need a warning from me, I suppose, how you meddle with wasps' nests again; but, if you are wise, you will let this be a profitable lesson to you with respect to other things besides wasps. All this arose from your putting too much confidence in your own judgment. If you had asked anybody, who was the least conversant with such matters, they would have told you that there was no surer way of getting stung than the plan which you adopted; but you thought yourselves more clever and knowing than other people, and your present condition is the consequence. And so it will always be, as long as you are self-confident. Sooner or later, you will be certain to buy your experience at a dear rate. You will find that there are many things in this world besides wasps, which can plant a sharp sting in

you, but which will leave you unmolested till you meddle with them in an improper manner, and against the advice of those who are older and wiser than yourself."

When Mr. Warlingham had said this to Kennedy, he turned to Mr. Dilwyn. "It is really quite lamentable," observed he, "to see how continually that boy Jolliffe is getting into mischief. In many respects he is a good boy; but he seems never happy, except when he is doing something daring or venturesome."

"I cannot hear, sir," replied the schoolmaster, "that he is at all ill-disposed, or that he is guilty of any wanton mischief. I never have any complaints of him from the farmers, that he breaks their hedges, or does anything wrong in that kind of way; he is generally the only sufferer by his own mischief. You remember how nearly he got drowned last year, and what a fall he had out of the oak tree in the play-ground. I think, sir, he is one of the few boys to whom school does more harm than good; he is spoiled by his school-fellows. He is a daring, good-humoured, light-hearted little fellow, and very popular with his com-

panions. They like to be led by him; and, as he is fond of being a leader, he feels, as it were, constrained to make himself notorious. It is a great misfortune to him that he has naturally such high spirits."

"Do not say so, Mr. Dilwyn," replied the Vicar kindly. "God bestowed them on him for some gracious purpose. He gives each of us the qualities which He thinks best suited to us, and it is our own fault if we do not so discipline them as may best promote His glory, and the welfare of our own souls. If He has bestowed on this boy a high spirit, His Providence will probably place him in circumstances under which it will be needed. Meanwhile, we must endeavour to make him less thoughtless, and impress upon him the mischief which his example may do to others. I am afraid the steadiest boys in the school are just those with whom he is the least fond of associating, otherwise their influence might be of more service to him, than all the advice which you or I could give him."

And then Mr. Warlingham walked away from the part of the school in which he had

been standing, and said something in a low tone of voice to Mr. Dilwyn. What this was none of the boys knew; but Harry Martin, as he sat writing his copy, could not help hearing the rest of the Vicar's observations; and he found them recurring to his mind over and over again in the course of the day.

The same evening, when school was over, he set out on a walk to the old toll-house, which lay at a different end of the village to that in which his own parents lived.

"I feel very awkward," thought Harry to himself; "I don't much like going. I should feel so put out if he were to tell me to mind my own business. I have half a mind to turn back. I wonder whether I had not better turn back."

"Turn back," said Inclination. "Go forward," whispered Conscience. And so Harry went forward, for he knew that *that* whisperer was to be trusted. And as he proceeded, he found that his doubts began to disappear; and, though, when he got to the wicket-gate, they somewhat revived, he consoled himself by reflecting, "Well, at any rate he will take

it kindly that I go to inquire after him: there can be no offence in that; and if I have no opportunity to say anything more particular to him, why, it cannot be helped."

The cottage door was closed, but Andrew's voice was heard within. He was singing:—a sure proof that Widow Jolliffe was not at home. And thus he sang,—

"A carrion crow sat on an oak,
Watching a tailor shape his cloak.
Wife, bring me my old bent bow,
That I may shoot yon carrion crow.
The tailor he shot, and missed his mark,
And shot his own sow quite through the heart."

Harry Martin knocked at the door.

"Come in," cried Merry Andrew, "come in, whoever you are, and sit down. I'm sorry not to be able to hand you a chair, but I can't see my way for my eyes and my nose. My eyes! what a nose I've got! My nose! what eyes I've got!"

Harry could not help laughing at Andrew's appearance, and comical way of describing it.

"I'm very sorry to see you so disfigured Andrew, though you force me to laugh."

"That's Harry Martin, I'm sure. I could tell your good-natured voice anywhere, even if I were as blind as Barnaby Stote. Oh Harry, Harry, I'm very bad." And Andrew screwed his swollen features into a most ludicrous expression of misfortune.

"I am glad at any rate to find that you are not too bad to have your joke, Merry."

"Hush, hush, don't talk about jokes, Harry, I'm too bad for joking," and then he began to sing through his nose, in a most dismal strain,

"Wife bring me some brandy in a spoon,
For our old sow is in a swoon,
Sing heigh ho, the carrion crow,
Fol de riddle, lol de riddle, hi ding do!"

"No, no, Andrew," replied Martin, "I've got no brandy for you, and I don't think you'll go into a swoon this time."

"I'm not so sure of that, Henry; it is enough to make one sick and faint too, to be obliged to stop in the house all day, with no eyes, and a face as round as a puff ball. I think even you, as steady as you are, would hardly stand this. Oh what a job it is Harry, when Grannies take to poulticing."

"Yes, but your Granny is so kind that it seems as if it would be easy to put up with any thing she wished to do by you."

"Ah! you have not the trial:" replied Andrew, and you would not mind being kept in the house as much as I do: if you did, you would be as impatient as I am."

"I dare say I should, Andrew, or more so, and so I know it does not become me to say anything to you; but there *is* something which I wish very much to say to you, if you will not be offended."

Merry Andrew felt as if the conversation was likely to take an unpleasant turn, so he tried to turn it off, and began once more a scrap of a song,—

"Old woman, old woman, shall we go a shearing?
Speak a little louder, Sir, I'm very hard of hearing."

"None are so deaf as those who won't hear, Andrew," observed Harry Martin, in a hesitating tone. "I'm sure I don't want to take upon me to advise you, but I wished to repeat something I heard said about you this morn-

ing, and which I thought you might wish to know."

"About me!" exclaimed Andrew, whose curiosity was now roused. "What was it? out with it!"

"Mr. Warlingham came down to school, this morning, and...."

"Well," said Andrew, growing fidgetty, but doing his best to conceal it by an off-hand manner, "Well, there was nothing much out of the way in that. Go on."

But Harry was timid, and felt that unless he told his story his own way, he should never get it out at all. "Mr. Warlingham," he began once more, "Mr. Warlingham came down to school this morning...."

"Ah, exactly so," cried Andrew interrupting him, and going off into a song again,—

"The cat came fiddling into the barn
With a pair of bagpipes under his arm."

"And when he had heard the first class," continued Harry.

"Who heard the first class? Was it the cat?" asked Andrew mischievously.

"No, no, the Vicar. You know that well enough. When he had heard the first class, he asked Mr. Dilwyn to bring him the...."

"Bagpipes? asked Merry Andrew, taking up a stick which lay by him, and playing on it with his fingers, at the same time flapping his arm against his side, and making a kind of droning sound, like the musical instrument of which he was speaking.

"I would not laugh if I could help it," replied Harry, "for I really want to speak seriously to you. Will you listen to me?"

He added these words so kindly and earnestly, that Andrew became grave and attentive in a moment, and Harry being thus put at his ease, he repeated without hesitation the conversation between Mr. Warlingham and the schoolmaster, of which the reader has already been put in possession.

Jolliffe listened till Martin had ceased speaking, and then, with great cordiality of manner, thanked him for what he had told him. "There's many a one," said he, "of those, who call themselves my friends, that would not have said a word about all this,

been standing, and said something in a low tone of voice to Mr. Dilwyn. What this was none of the boys knew; but Harry Martin, as he sat writing his copy, could not help hearing the rest of the Vicar's observations; and he found them recurring to his mind over and over again in the course of the day.

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Harry could not help laughing at Andrew's appearance, and comical way of describing it.

"I'm very sorry to see you so disfigured Andrew, though you force me to laugh."

summon up courage to make a great many changes. Now tell me the first thing you want me to alter."

"I think," said Harry, "it would be a great deal better for you if you would resolve at once never again to pretend to be what you are not. It is a trifling with conscience. And it is no better than hypocrisy. And it sets a bad example to many, while at the same time it deceives but few."

"But how do you know," answered Andrew colouring up, "that I do pretend to be what I am not?"

"Why you yourself have just admitted it," replied his friend, "for you said that you often rattle away and affect to be light-hearted when you are not so. But there was no need of you to confess it. Many things which we think we conceal from others are as clear to them as the sun in the sky. We never see ourselves as others see us: they read bad motives in us, and, it may be, detect dirty tricks, of which we scarcely suspect ourselves. Often and often, Andrew, have I seen you do things which I have known all the while you

were only doing for the purpose of shewing off before others, and I dare say there is not a boy in the school but has seen it too."

"Do you really think so, Harry?"

"Merry, I am sure of it."

"What a fool I have been, then!" exclaimed Andrew sorrowfully. "And all the boys who have pretended to be such friends, and have egged me on, and to amuse whom I have said and done many things which I knew to be wrong, have been laughing at, or despising me all the while!"

"I do not know *that*," said Harry, "but I think they would have respected you more in the long run, if they had seen that you were set upon doing right, rather than upon being much talked about, and a leader among us."

"Yes, the steady ones, like you, and Ward, and Sanders would have done so, but not those who love fun, and who gave me the name of Merry Andrew."

"All would have done so sooner or later," replied Martin, "and you would have had a far stronger influence over them, than that which you have been at such pains to keep up *by noise and* merriment."

"But how could I be 'Merry Andrew,' if I ceased to be merry?"

"Ah, that name has done most of the mischief! You are proud of it, and could not bear to lose it now you have borne it so long: but to me there seems nothing desirable about it. For what is a *real* Merry Andrew, but a kind of fool at a show? I have not been at many fairs, but I never saw a Merry Andrew that I did not feel ashamed that a *man* should demean himself by taking such a part. I would rather break stones on the roads than gain my livelihood by such a profession. And I never could think why you should be proud of such a nick-name."

"I never should have been proud," replied Andrew indignantly, "of being supposed like the man with a chalked face, and a red and yellow dress, hung about with bells. The boys never meant to compare me with him."

"Then why, do you think, did they give you the name?"

"Just to shew that they liked me, and that I made them laugh, and because I made it my business to amuse them."

"A 'Merry Andrew' makes it his business to amuse," observed Martin, "and that is what they were thinking of."

Jolliffe sighed and was silent. It seemed as if this had never before struck him. "I don't want to be a buffoon," said he at last sturdily.

"No, Andrew, I am sure of that; you are capable of better things. Nor did I mean to say that you were one; only what you do without thought sometimes seems to tend that way, and if you were to go on till you were a man, caring for nothing but how to amuse yourself and others, I don't think you would be answering the ends for which God sent you into the world. Do you?"

"Of course not," replied Jolliffe; and there was another long silence. "Well, Harry," said he by and bye, "you have set me thinking about myself more than I have done for a long while, and I am thankful to you; but I really feel quite dismayed. I am sure I never shall have courage to go on differently. All the boys will think it so odd, and they will say such things, and I shall get so laughed *at.*"

"I thought you liked being laughed at.... at least," added Harry correcting himself, "that you did not mind being laughed at."

"Yes, indeed, I should mind it very much; I mean being laughed at for that kind of thing. I should feel so ashamed."

"Andrew, that would be *false* shame: and it would be a great sin to shrink from doing what you know to be right, either for fear or for shame. We ought to fear God rather than man. Our shame ought to be at our ever allowing ourselves to feel ashamed at retracing our steps when we have done wrong: and when folks try to talk us over, and persuade us that what is wrong, is not, after all, so *very* wrong, we should give them some such answer as the Apostles did to the High Priest: 'Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye.'"*

"I am glad you have reminded me of this, Harry, I will try and be brave."

"If you will be as brave in doing right, as you are in all other things, Andrew, there is

* Acts iv. 19.

no fear but you will do well. And God, we know, will help us to become what we ought to be if we ask Him, and if we use our own best endeavours to please Him, while we ask Him."

Then Harry Martin went home, and Andrew was left by himself to think over all that had passed. He had plenty of time for thought, for his grandmother did not come home for an hour or two, and then, when he went to bed, he found that instead of going to sleep, his thoughts recurred again and again to the same subject. The more he examined himself the less reason he found to be pleased with himself, and he saw that he was, in many respects, acting very foolishly; and before he went to sleep he had prayed God earnestly to give him grace to do better for the time to come, and enable him not to mind ridicule.

And his prayer, no doubt, was heard, for he soon became placed in circumstances which called forth all the best points in his character, and which taught him of how little real value are the smiles and favour, or the ridicule and *contempt, of* the world in which we live.

The inconvenience from the wasps' stings did not last above a day or two, and Andrew returned as usual to school. His companions thought he was still unwell, he was so unlike himself. Some said he was grown so dull that they should not have known him; others declared, laughingly, that the wasps had cowed him, or that Becky Jolliffe's poultices had broken his spirit. Harry Martin, who knew the truth, only judged that he was carefully watching over himself, and trying to avoid the faults into which he was most liable to fall. In the course of the very first day, at least half-a-dozen occasions occurred on which, a week before, Andrew Jolliffe would have been ready to lead his companions into noisy mischief; but now he remained inactive and took no part. Once or twice he had a great struggle with himself not to do something which he was assured that "nobody could do so well" as he, or which was declared by common consent to be "just the thing for Merry." But he *did* abstain, and each time of abstinence his heart felt lighter, and he found it less difficult to say "no," in

spite of the very general wonder expressed as to "what ever had come over Andrew," and in spite of the proposal made by his friend Kennedy, that he should be called *Dreary*, and not *Merry* Andrew.

Still the trial was a sharp one to a boy of Jolliffe's disposition; but though sharp, it was not destined to be long.

One evening, about a month after Andrew's conversation with Harry Martin (a month of growing steadiness and improvement on Andrew's part), he was returning from school with some other boys, Kennedy, and Dick Middleton, and William Dale, Zachary Watts, and little Johnny Drew: they were wandering along as lads are wont to wander when school is over, and the day's work is done, enjoying the freedom from restraint, and the fresh air, and the opportunity of giving vent to their spirits,—now racing with one another, or darting after the first object which attracted their notice, shouting, laughing, squealing by turns,—when, as they proceeded down the road, they heard the sound of heavy blows, as though a stake were being *driven into* the ground.

"What's that noise?" said Johnny Drew.

"They're mending the fence, I suppose," replied Dale.

"Fence!" exclaimed Dick Middleton, "no such thing. The sound comes out of the marl-pit. They're going to have a fall of marl. Let us go and see it."

"What nonsense," cried Kennedy, "who ever heard of folks drawing marl at this time of year? They don't marl the land now, do they?"

"I know that, Bob, as well as you; I don't know what they are digging the marl for, I only say they are digging it."

"I've got ears, I suppose, as well as you," rejoined Kennedy.

"And I've got eyes, I suppose, as well as you," retorted Middleton, who had now run a few yards in advance. "Look there! they *are* going to have a fall, and here we are just in time to see it."

The boys ran on and saw it was as Middleton had stated.

"There!" cried he triumphantly, "I suppose you'll believe me now, for there's Thomas

Fisher at the top of the bank, with his beetle in his hand. It was he who was driving in the piles."

They were now at the entrance of the marl-pit, which lay by the road side.

Kennedy was provoked at finding himself in the wrong; so he gave Middleton no answer, but addressed himself to the labourer at the top of the bank. "Hilloa, Thomas! what are you doing there? What are you going to do with the marl?"

"What's that to you?" answered the gruff voice of Thomas Fisher, who was not a man of many words, and who was not inclined to be questioned by anybody at that moment, for he happened to be very hot and out of humour; hot with labour, and out of humour because he found he was engaged in a harder job than he had expected.

The reader is probably aware that the method usually adopted by those who get marl is as follows:—in order to save themselves as much labour in digging as possible, they undermine and hollow out a certain space on the lower portion of the face of the cliff, *taking care*, however, not to excavate so

much as to expose themselves to the danger of the soil overhead falling in upon them and crushing them. When they have removed as much marl as they dare below, they go to the top of the cliff and commence driving in piles of wood, in a line with the portion excavated underneath. The piles act like a wedge: they force the overhanging portion of the soil outwards, or split it from the adjoining parts, and thus that which supports it, or holds it together, being removed, it falls down in large fragments, and is carted away without further trouble. The process is one which requires considerable care, judgment, and experience, as well as a knowledge of the nature of the ground, and the quality of the soil, for as, on the one hand, if the cliff be undermined too much the unhappy labourer will probably be buried alive by its sudden fall; so, on the other, if the excavation does not go far enough into the face of the marl, the driving in piles from above will be of little use.

Now Thomas Fisher had not, as he supposed, undermined the bank sufficiently; he *had driven in* all his piles, but the upper

portion of the marl remained immovable. He was, however, too prudent to attempt further excavation, so he was just going away to fetch a few more piles, when he heard Robert Kennedy's voice inquiring what he was doing.

"What's that to you?" he shouted in reply; "keep out of the pit, you young jack-anapes, if you don't wish to be crushed like a nutshell. Don't you see there's going to be a fall?"

"I see that you want one and can't get it," shouted Middleton saucily.

Thomas Fisher made some angry reply, which was lost in the laughter of the boys, and then left the spot in order to bring more piles.

"What a cross old growler he is!" cried Middleton.

"What fun it would be," cried William Dale, "to hide his beetle for him!"

"Aye, or to lay his coat and waistcoat where the marl will bury it," said Zachary Watts, an ill-conditioned boy, whose mischief was seldom of a harmless character.

"Oh no," exclaimed Merry Andrew, "that would be a great shame; we have no business to do such a thing as that."

"You only say that, Andrew, because you dare not do it yourself."

"There's no fun in Andrew now," said Dale.

"He's afraid of his granny, and old Dilwyn," added Watts laughing.

Andrew coloured up, and felt angry and hurt when he saw Kennedy joining in the laugh.

"Never mind them, Merry," cried little Johnny Drew.

"Ah, he'll make a fine play-fellow for you, Johnny, by and bye, when he gets big enough," exclaimed Dale in an insulting tone. "Andrew, look sharp, and you'll be a man before your granny."

"I dare do as much as any of you, if it isn't wrong," answered Merry, swelling with the sense of injustice.

"Wrong! who cares what's wrong?" exclaimed Zachary Watts.

"I do," replied Andrew sturdily, "and you *know I'm as* bold as you are, any day.

"No I don't," retorted Watts. "You're grown quite a coward."

"Try me with anything that is *not* wrong," said Andrew.

"Go and fetch that white stone from under the marl there," replied Watts, pointing to a stone which lay under the excavated portion of the cliff.

"That *is* wrong," said Harry, "I have no right to risk my life for any such nonsense. The marl may fall any minute."

"Oh yes," retorted Watts, "and the sky may fall too, and then, you know, we shall catch larks. I thought how it would be; I knew you would find an excuse," continued he with a sneer. "Now look at me."

So saying, Zachary Watts ran forward to fetch the stone; at the same instant, Andrew observed a piece of marl falling from the side of the cliff, and heard a crack, not loud, indeed, but distinct. Without the slightest hesitation he dashed down the bank, seized Watts by the arm, and swung him round with all his force. It was the work of a moment. In the next moment the whole

mass of marl, weighing many tons, gave way, and came down with a tremendous crash. Zachary Watts was saved: but in the exertion of saving him, Andrew's foot slipped; he reeled, struggled forward, reeled again, and fell. Amid the thundering din of the falling rock his companions heard a cry of agony. For a few seconds they were too much terrified to know what to do, but as the cloud of dust cleared away, they saw poor Andrew lying senseless on the ground, with a large fragment of the marl lying upon and crushing one of his legs!

MERRY ANDREW.

Part III.

EVERY time that we join in the Litany of our Holy Church we pray our good Lord to deliver us from "sudden death." We hear of sudden deaths continually, and when such events occur, we speak of them as very awful warnings, and we feel them to be so many admonitions to ourselves to be ready also, and we reflect with more care than usual upon those passages of Scripture which assure us that it will be just at the time of which we think not, and in the very hour in which we do not expect Him, that our Lord will come.

And so, for a season at least, we feel forcibly that we ought to be in a continual state of preparation for that which *may* come at any time.

And yet it is to be feared, that we are, in the main, apt to think of sudden death as a thing which is more likely to befall others than ourselves. At any rate we do not live habitually as if we thought that such a judgment might be very near,—close at hand, though we know it not. We do not reflect that it may be just as near us in childhood and youth as in later life. And hence we should be in a great measure taken by surprise if we were to have a sudden summons. It is on this account, and because the Church well knows the infirmity of our mortal nature, that she teaches us to pray for deliverance from *sudden* death. If we were what we ought to be, living in entire obedience to God, and in the unbroken fulfilment of the vows which we made in Baptism, perhaps we might be glad to die suddenly, since thereby we should be saved the trials and sufferings of a lingering illness; but, being what we are,

it becomes us all to pray that we may have space given us for repentance and amendment of life, and for a season of final preparation before we go hence and are no more seen.

How little did Andrew Jolliffe think, when he woke in the morning of the day of which we have been speaking, of the condition in which he should be before its close! How little, probably, had he thought of the full meaning of the words, when, in his morning prayer, he had besought God to "deliver him from evil," and to grant that on that day he should neither fall into sin, nor *run into any kind of danger!* He had prayed, it may be, on that day,—as on many other days, on which he had taken his preservation from accident as a matter of course,--using the *form* which he had learned by heart, but without entering deeply into its spirit: and now it had pleased God, who had defended him from so many dangers, to withdraw His protecting Hand for a season, and to permit evil to come upon him. Oh that you and I, dear reader, may realize to ourselves more stedfastly that in the midst of life we are in death, and learn to live

in such a manner as that death may never find us unprepared!

We left poor Andrew lying senseless on the ground, with a heavy fragment of marl crushing his leg. He was *senseless*, but he was *not* dead; though the boys thought that he was actually dead, and even Thomas Fisher was not sure that he was not dying.

Fortunately, Thomas was just returning with his piles when the fall of marl took place, and upon hearing the cries of Kennedy and his companions he ran forward as fast as he could.

"I told you how it would be!" he exclaimed, and he was going to have added, "And you deserve all that has happened, whatever it may be." But he was too much alarmed, when he saw that an accident had really taken place, to reprove the boys for their rashness.

"Is any one buried under the marl?" he inquired anxiously.

"No, no," cried the boys, "only poor Merry is partly crushed by it. Oh Master *Fisher* make haste, and dig him out!"

"Thank God it is no worse!" said the old man. Then, as rapidly, but as carefully as he could, he removed the soil lump, after lump, till only a small quantity lay upon the sufferer.

Kennedy was about to drag Andrew's leg out by main force.

"Softly, softly!" cried the old man, "or you will only make bad worse. We must get away the soil as gently as we can; we shall find his poor leg terribly mashed and crushed, I'll be bound!"

And so it turned out. The sight was so sad and sickening that the reader shall be spared the description of it. Suffice it to say, that when the marl was removed, the leg remained in its original position: all power of stirring it was gone. Andrew lay quite still, and to all appearance dead.

Thomas Fisher unbuttoned the poor boy's waistcoat, untied his neckcloth, rubbed his hands, but still there were no signs of life. "Fetch a drop of water from the river,—nay, nay, never run home for a jug, bring it in your hat." Dale did as Thomas bade him.

"Now, Kennedy, run you down to the cottages yonder, and tell the women to come up, and bring a chair with you,—aye, and take that child with you; it's not fit he should see such things. Make haste. Cheer up, Johnny, he'll soon be better." This was addressed to Johnny Drew who was almost fainting.

In a few minutes there were Martha Stokes, and Rachel Ward, and Susan Wright upon the spot. Kind mothers all three, and they tended poor Andrew with as much anxiety as if he had been one of their own children. And they had soon the comfort of seeing signs of returning life, for Andrew opened his eyes, and before long was able to drink some water. But he could not speak; he could only moan piteously. Then Susan Wright went as fast as she could to the toll-house to tell Widow Jolliffe what had happened, and Kennedy was sent off to the Vicarage to ask Mr. Warlingham to allow his groom to ride off to Amworth for a surgeon. As soon as Zachary Watts heard this order given, he thought within himself that the Vicar would be sure to come directly and inquire into the cause of the acci-

dent, and his conscience told him how his conduct would shew in the affair. So, like a sneaking coward, he slunk away; and nobody missed him, for all were thinking about Andrew. Zachary who had caused the mischief was thinking of nobody but himself, and how he could best save himself from any unpleasant consequences.

It was a terrible shock to poor sickly Rebecca Jolliffe when she heard what had befallen her grandson. Kind-hearted Susan Wright made the best of matters,—that is, she told all that could comfort, and said as little as she could of what would alarm,—but Susan's face told more than her tongue, and Rebecca saw fears which were not expressed.

But it was a time for acting, not for talking; so she said little else than "God's will be done!" and endeavoured in silence to prepare herself for the worst, praying inwardly that she might in all things make God's will her own; and then, with a calmness which, if she had been in a state to think of such matters, would have surprised herself, she rapidly thought over what was most likely to be

needed, in bringing the sufferer home, and provided it, so far as she could, before she left the house.

And herein Rebecca exemplified the difference between a well-regulated and an ill-regulated mind. There are many persons in the world, who, when a sudden trial comes, think themselves at liberty to give way to their feelings, to indulge instead of restraining their emotions, to neglect their duties, and to consider themselves only. To such persons the chastisements of God are seldom blessings: they are apt to become worse instead of better for affliction. They grow more selfish, more self-indulgent, or more discontented than they were before.

Not so those who have learned to discipline themselves in the school of Christ. They know that it behoves them to master their feelings, and not to be mastered by them. They have made it their object to bring *every* feeling into subjection, and so their hopes and fears are alike chastened. Hence, when trials come, they meet them in faith and resignation. They do not feel less than others,

but they are supported more. Their minds are in a healthy state: there is no fever or restlessness about them which causes the the wounds that God has inflicted to fester. They do not add to their sufferings by struggling, or by any wilfulness: they lie meekly under the rod. And their Almighty Father pities them: and even while He makes them in some sort sharers of His Son's Cross, He helps them to bear it. He tempers their trials to their strength, and when all around is dark gives them light and peace within.

It was not long after Andrew was carried home before both the surgeon and Mr. Warlingham arrived; the latter, indeed, hastened up to the toll-gate as soon as he heard of the accident, for he thought he might, possibly, be of some service before the medical attendant reached the spot. But he soon saw that the case was far beyond his skill, and he therefore only gave directions that Andrew's clothes should be cut off, and that he should be laid on the bed.

When Mr. Cooper, the surgeon, had examined the limb, he called Becky Jolliffe and

Mr. Warlingham aside, and told them that the injuries were of such a nature that Andrew's life could only be preserved at the expense of the limb,—that the leg must be taken off somewhere above the knee. To hear this seemed a greater trial to the poor old woman than even the first intelligence of the accident: and I am sure she would have gladly had her own leg amputated, if, by so doing, it would have been possible to have saved her grandson so much additional suffering. Mr. Warlingham did his best to console her, by reminding her under Whose merciful Providence the trial had been sent, and by exhorting her to steady trust in Him, and entire submission to His will. The surgeon assured her that such operations as taking off a limb were every-day occurrences,—that a leg is amputated in two or three minutes,—that recovery generally followed,—and that Andrew would soon get reconciled to the use of a wooden leg, and move about almost as readily as if no accident had happened.

This last assertion was, indeed, somewhat beyond the truth, but still Becky had seen

many persons very little inconvenienced by the use of a wooden leg, and the reflection was so far a comfort to her. However, she knew that, whatever happened, it was *her* duty to bear up, and make the best of it for Andrew's sake; and this, with the blessing of God, she stedfastly resolved to do.

At the proper time, Mr. Cooper begged the Vicar to tell the suffering boy what it was necessary for him to undergo. And this he did as kindly as he could, not concealing from Andrew how great a trial lay before him, but endeavouring, at the same time, to cheer him, and to put thoughts into the boy's mind, which, so to speak, might enable him to cheer himself.

"I do not think, Sir," said Andrew, with a groan, "that taking off my leg could be more pain than I feel at present,—perhaps not so much. But I think I could go through anything if you were with me, and speaking so kindly."

"Any comfort or support which I *can* give you, Andrew, I *will* give you, even as if you were my own child. But let us pray God,

Who can do far, far better for us than we can do for one another, that it will please Him to give you strength to go through this trial."

"I will try and feel, as well as utter the wish, Sir, that His will may be done."

When Rebecca Jolliffe heard this affecting speech, she was so moved by it that she began to sob in spite of herself, and left the room, for she did not wish that Andrew should see her distress.

Andrew, however, had already seen it, but would not notice it till she had shut the door. He then turned his eyes on Mr. Warlingham, and said, "I don't know that I could go through with it, if *she* were by, Sir; and I am sure it would be too much for her. For all she bears up so well, you don't know, Sir, what a tender heart poor Granny has. Could you not send her down to the Vicarage, Sir, for something, and let her find it over when she comes back? I am ready, Sir, when the gentlemen are."

"You are a noble boy, Andrew." said the Vicar, much affected.

"No, Sir, I am a poor weak one, and you

judge too well of me, but I have caused Granny so much trouble, that I should be glad to spare her this. Let it be so, Sir, if you please."

Under such circumstances, therefore, the operation took place. Widow Jolliffe was spared the sight of what could have only inflicted unmingled distress, while she could have been of no real use: and Andrew, placing one hand within Mr. Warlingham's, underwent the amputation of his leg. One sharp and bitter cry escaped him, and that was all. Everything went on favourably; Mr. Cooper and his assistant finished their anxious task skilfully, and with as much rapidity as was consistent with the patient's safety; and then Andrew was once more lifted into bed.

"I always thought you a bold, brave boy, Andrew," said Mr. Warlingham, taking his place beside him, "but you have shewn to-day a resolution and manliness which not many *men*, I think, would have exhibited under like circumstances. At least I do not feel as if I could have behaved as you have done."

"I pray God, Sir, that neither you nor

any belonging to you may ever be exposed to the trial," replied Andrew, with a sweet calm smile on his face, and with a composure which shewed how mercifully he was supported, "but if it comes, do not doubt that strength will come with it, since it has been granted even to me."*

It is a well-known fact that those who are cheerful and patient are, humanly speaking, much more likely to get over dangerous illnesses than those who are of an opposite temper. The mind acts upon the body; and hence impatience produces fever and restlessness; and despondency does nothing to help nature in her struggle with disease. A physician, therefore, will always be most hopeful of the recovery of a sick person whose mind is well regulated, and whose *habit* it is to submit himself in all things to God's disposal, with cheerfulness. On these, among other grounds, Mr. Cooper augured favourably of Andrew's case. And he was not disappointed.

* This was, word for word, the answer made to the writer, by a female whom it became his duty to attend, under circumstances similar to those recorded above.

No bad symptoms arose, and the means adopted for Andrew's recovery were blessed by the Almighty with success.

That high spirit, which, while uncontrolled, threatened to be a source of evil in his disposition, was now of great service to him; and that natural gaiety and light-heartedness which had procured him the nickname of Merry Andrew, and which had so frequently brought him into trouble, were now, under the discipline of suffering, and the teaching of religion, made to contribute in no slight degree to the alleviation of his own pains, and of the anxiety of his friends.

And Andrew had many friends, and his patience and good-humour procured him more. His school-fellows might be constantly seen hanging about the toll-house, and on the faces of each little group might be read their deep interest about him. And though many days and weeks passed by before any of them were allowed to see him, the more thoughtful and affectionate among them were still as regular as ever in their inquiries. Many a neighbour, too, would come down to Becky Jolliffe, with

offerings of such things as they had, which they deemed likely to suit the sufferer's taste, —a fresh egg or two,—or a few strawberries or other fruit. The intrinsic value of the present was little, perhaps, but the good will which brought it, was a thing which gold could not purchase, and which they who have experienced it know to be far more precious than gold. The Vicar, too, was constant, in his visits, and supplied many little things which others had not thought of. But the person to whose kindness Andrew owed more than to any one else, was a lady—I will call her Lady Jane,—for that is the name of one whose form rises before me, whenever I think of a sweet and gentle nature, finding its own happiness in contributing to the happiness of those around it, in ministering with thoughtful attention to lingering sickness, and striving to lighten the trials of impending bereavement.

Lady Jane was the kindest of friends to Andrew, and when his recovery was so far advanced that nourishing food was proper for him, she provided him with meat, and wine,

and many other things which his grandmother was too poor to buy, and the lack of which would have materially delayed his recovery. The reader knows enough of Andrew by this time to be satisfied that, in spite of all the care taken of him, and the interest excited about him, he did not grow selfish. I verily believe that, throughout his whole illness, he thought more about his grandmother than about himself. If he could only bring a smile into her face he was happy.

"I'll tell you how it is, Granny," he said one day, "this leg of mine is the greatest piece of luck that ever happened to our family."

"What do you mean, child?" asked the old woman.

"Why, when did I ever get rabbit and onions for dinner, till this happened?"

"Onions, often enough," replied Becky, "but no rabbits certainly."

"Well then, Granny, there is great preferment in the rabbits, at any rate. And yet, though I liked my dinner well enough, I can't

but say I'd rather have the rabbits alive than dead. If we had but a hutch full of rabbits we should be quite rich. Not but what we're like to grow rich now, if saving can make us rich."

"How so, Andrew?"

"Just think of John Hoby's bill for shoes, Granny! You'll never have to pay for another *pair* for me at any rate. One shoe and one stocking will do now, and they'll wear for ever, for I shan't be able to *run* them into holes."

Becky smiled, and then the tears rose in her eyes, and then she tried to smile in spite of them.

"And another thing, Granny; think what a lot of trades there are that I can follow without feeling any inconvenience. I could be," he continued, counting on his fingers, "a shoemaker, or a tailor, or a watchmaker, or a turner, or—oh, Granny, I should so like to be a turner."

"But you forget, Andrew, that it will cost money to apprentice you; and how am I to find it, and how should I ever get on if you *were to leave* me?"

"That's true to be sure, Granny; and it makes me so happy to think I am a comfort to you, for I know I used to be a sad plague. Don't you remember my beating the sauce-pans together, and singing,

'Dan, dan, randaridan,
Tink for the kettle, and tank for the pan,'

till, as you said, I gave you the head-ache for a week. Oh, Granny, I've been a sore trouble to you at times; and I'm very vexed whenever I think of it. But I know better, I hope, now than I did then; and at any rate I know how to feel for those whose heads ache. I don't think I ever had had the head-ache when I used to be so noisy. And now," he continued, suddenly reverting to the subject from which he had digressed, "this talking of heads has put a bright thought into mine. I've hit upon a trade. There's nobody in the place to make straw hats now Betty Beaven is dead. I'll certainly set up for a hatter. Just think, Granny, what a lot of heads there are in our parish that are always thatched with straw.

There are nearly all the boys in the school to begin with; and I'm sure they'd rather buy their hats of me than of anybody else; and I dare say, if I make a good job of it, many of the men will come to me too."

"Well, Andrew," replied Widow Jolliffe, you *have* hit upon a very good notion at last. When I was a girl, I lived a good deal in Hertfordshire, and was a famous plaiter. My fingers are stiff, and my eyes are bad now, but I think I could soon put you in the way of it, and we have so many kind friends that if you take pains, and don't charge too dear; I really think you *may* do something towards a livelihood."

Andrew was full of glee at the thought, and would not rest till he had got a bundle of straws on his bed, and had been taught how to plait. As he was a sharp handy lad, he soon got into the way of it, in spite of his declaring that all his fingers were become thumbs, and that such "fiddle-faddle" work was only fit for women. When Mr. Warlingham found out how he was employed he gave him much encouragement, and promised to

provide him with blocks, and whatever else was needed for carrying on his simple trade. Meanwhile, the amputated limb went on as favourably as possible, and though Andrew was as much puzzled as many who were older and wiser than he have been, to know how it happened that he was continually suffering pain in that part of his leg which was lying in the churchyard, I believe he had as rapid and as easy a cure as often takes place.

One day that Harry Martin was sitting by his bed-side, and Andrew was wondering how the extraordinary (though, in such cases, I believe, invariable) circumstance above alluded to could be,—namely, how, and why it was that the nerves, or the imagination, or whatever it be, should produce such sensations as to give the patient the impression that the limb which has been cut off,—perhaps, weeks before,—is still a living and sentient part of the body—while the boys, I say, were trying, in their fashion, to fathom this deep mystery, a knock was heard at the cottage door, and Mr. Watts entered. He was a shoemaker by trade, and lived, not in Yateshull parish, but

in an adjoining hamlet, where they were a considerable number of those unhappy persons who have left the Church, and who, by joining Dissenters, have become guilty of the dreadful sin of schism.

Mr. Watts did not call himself a Dissenter, but, as he as often went to the meeting-house as to the church, he was in that respect more inconsistent and more blameworthy than if, upon some conscientious scruple, he had quitted the communion in which he was born. It is even better to be cold, than lukewarm; for, as it has been truly said, "decision of purpose, and consistency of action, even on the wrong side, are ever both more respectable, and more hopeful, than courses and allegiances which are incompatible."

Mr. Watts was one of those people who exemplify the truth of the proverb, that "a little knowledge is a dangerous thing." He had a very decent knowledge of the contents of his Bible, and he therefore persuaded himself that he understood it. If a neighbour complained of the difficulties he found in making out the meaning of parts of Holy

Writ, Watts would shake his head and say, "Ah, none can understand Scripture but those to whom it is given to do so;"—meaning, thereby, that he was himself one of the few who had such a privilege, and that his neighbour was in a state of darkness.

And then, having unbounded reliance on his own judgment, he would offer to explain what his neighbour thought obscure, and having plenty to say for himself he would expound the passage. And pretty nonsense he generally made of it, but that was all one to Joseph Watts. Those who knew him would not listen to him; but those who were ignorant and knew no better persuaded themselves that they were much the wiser for his instructions, and though, in fact, they had only been bewildered with hard words, and expressions which conveyed no meaning to their minds, they would occasionally lift up their hands and eyes and exclaim, "What a wonderful man is Mr. Watts, and what a pity it is he is not a preacher!"

All this notoriety Mr. Watts liked very much, for he was a weak, silly man, carried

away with vanity and self-conceit. So, as I say, being puffed up with his small stock of knowledge, he was fond of wandering about from one church to another, and from one meeting-house to another, passing his censures on what he heard, and quite satisfied in his own mind that nobody's judgment was so good as his own. It followed, of course, that he neglected the duties of that state of life to which it had pleased God to call him. Though making great professions about ruling his family and household well, his children, as the reader is already aware, were very ill-conditioned, demure enough in their father's presence, but mischievous, and rude, and ill-conducted when out of it, and artful enough to deceive him whenever they wished to do so. As for his trade, that fell off just as was to be expected. First it began to be said that "his sermons," as folks called them, "were better than his shoes;" by which it was pretty clearly insinuated that his shoes were worse made than those of other shoemakers; and then, in no long time, it was found out, that his leather was becoming worse, and his stitch-

ing careless, and his soles no better than brown paper; and next it was remarked that his much talking made him dry, and that he was getting into the habit of quenching his thirst by drinking spirits. True, he never got very tipsy; but was he ever quite sober? Why was his face so pale, and his eyes so red, and why did his hand shake so much? The end of it was, that as he neglected his trade, his trade left him, and then becoming a distressed man, he grew as discontented and disagreeable, as before he had been vain and overbearing.

"So!" said he, entering the cottage, and looking about him, "so, there's nobody at home. Where's Mrs. Jolliffe?"

"Gone up to Lady Jane's, Master Watts, for some broth for Andrew," replied Harry Martin.

"Humph!" ejaculated the shoemaker in a dissatisfied tone, "I think her ladyship might attend to her own neighbours first. I live half-a-mile nearer the Hall than you do; but she never sends *us* any of her good things. Well, we can do very well without them."

"Perhaps that is the reason why she does not send them," observed Harry, sharply enough.

"Tut! I'm no better off than my neighbours, for that matter," replied Joseph Watts with ready inconsistency. "But no, it's not that. Everything goes by favouritism with great folks; and those who will scrape and bow, and cringe, can get what they please. Now I'm above that."

Harry could hardly help smiling, for he knew that Watts' manner was even offensively servile to those in a higher rank, but he judged it better to make no reply. This was a disappointment to Joseph, who had a fine sentence or two which he was very fond of bringing out, about his contempt for great people. So there was a pause.

"Well," said he at length, kicking the bed on which Andrew was lying, and thereby jarring the poor boy's whole frame. "How do you get on?"

"Pretty well, thank you, Master Watts," replied the patient.

"A pretty job you made of it!" continued

the shoemaker. "You won't go into a marl-pit again in a hurry, I reckon."

"I don't think I'm likely to go anywhere again *in a hurry*," said Andrew with a good-humoured smile.

"You may think yourself well off. You have got off a great deal better than you deserved," rejoined Mr. Watts.

Andrew scarce knew what to say in reply to this. Certainly he had done a rash thing, but Joseph Watts ought, as it seemed, to be the last to reproach him with it, seeing that the act of rashness had saved Zachary Watts' life, though it had cost Andrew his leg. Perhaps, thought he to himself, he means that I tempted Providence, which was certainly wrong: at any rate God might have punished me yet more severely for my many sins. So, said Andrew, "Yes, indeed, I have been most mercifully dealt with, and I hope I feel grateful for being spared."

"I hope you do; and I suppose you repent what you did," said the shoemaker.

"No, indeed, Master Watts, I do not," replied Andrew with great sincerity, supposing

Watts to allude to the cost at which Zachary's life had been saved.

"Then what a miserable, hard-hearted wretch you must be!" exclaimed the shoemaker indignantly, "I'm sure it is high time," he continued, "that somebody speaks to you about the state of your poor soul. Your rich friends have pampered your body, but they have quite neglected that which is of more value than the body. But that's the way with them all, blinded with vanity, and besotted with their good things!"

"Indeed, Master Watts, you are quite wrong. Mr. Warlingham has been with me to teach me, and to read with me every day, or almost every day since my accident."

"Well, he's not here now," said Joseph Watts, "so I'll give you a little instruction. Hand me over your Bible."

"I am much obliged to you," answered Andrew with some hesitation of manner, "but if you please I had rather wait for Mr. Warlingham. He mostly comes about this time of day."

"I see him coming down the road now,"

observed Harry Martin, who had moved towards the window.

Joseph Watts looked in the direction to which Harry pointed; and then muttering something to himself in a dissatisfied tone, took up his hat, and, slamming the door after him, quitted the cottage, leaving the two boys puzzled and confused with the strangeness of his words and manner.

"How is little Jolliffe to-day?" asked the Vicar, as he met the shoemaker coming out of the cottage.

"Well enough seemingly *in body*, Sir," replied Joseph, with a strong emphasis on the last word, which was not lost on Mr. Warlingham, though he made no comment on it, for he had had too much experience of Joseph's powers of unprofitable talking to wish to invite a religious discussion. However the Vicar was not to escape so easily.

"A melancholy case that, Sir," said Watts.

"I do not think so," observed Mr. Warlingham, "I have rarely seen so much patience and cheerful resignation in so young a person."

"I wonder, then, if such be the case, why he has so great a repugnance to hear what is good, and to speak about the state of his soul."

"Surely, Mr. Watts, you fail to make allowance for Andrew's age; how can you expect a boy of ten or twelve years old to speak to one so much older than himself about the state of his soul? To mention nothing else, how is it likely that at his time of life he should have acquired the power of expressing his inward thoughts and feelings, or that he should have so little shyness in his nature as to be ready to make a confidence with a comparative stranger."

"Ah!" said Watts in a tone of self-satisfaction, "if you were to hear my boy Zachary talk!"

"I should not think the better of him for being a fluent talker, Mr. Watts," replied the Vicar. "I rather look to deeds than to words, as the evidences of a person's real character."

"So do I," replied the shoemaker colouring, for his conscience pricked him, "but as for my Zachary, his conversation is so edifying,

that I could sit and listen to him for any length of time."

"Take care that you do not make a hypocrite of him," said the Vicar very gravely. "I do not say that he may *not* be sincere; but I warn you that so sure as you give him encouragement to be often talking about his religious feelings, you will be tempting him to say *more* than he feels, in order that thereby he may attract more notice, and be more praised."

"My son, Sir, is no hypocrite," said Watts, looking angry and affronted, for he could not bear to have his judgment questioned. "He is no hypocrite, and what is more, Sir, though he may be no favourite of your's, he would never have attempted a fellow-creature's life, like that wretched Merry Andrew as they call him."

"Watts!" exclaimed the Vicar in amazement, "What can you mean?"

"I presume, Sir, you know how the accident happened by which his leg was broken?" replied Watts.

"He was playing very foolishly in the

marl-pit, when a fall took place, and crushed him," said the Vicar.

"Is that all you know, Sir?" asked Watts with a sarcastic smile. "If you will inquire, you will find that Jolliffe was trying to push my poor boy into the pit,—for he had quarrelled with him,—and that it was a mere chance, as we should call it, that he was not buried under the marl when it fell. Jolliffe did all he could to destroy him."

"Oh, impossible!" exclaimed the Vicar, with the most entire incredulity of manner.

"Ask Zachary, Sir," replied Watts.

"I shall prefer asking some of the other witnesses," answered the Vicar, "and when I have done so, I will speak to you again."

Fortunately for Andrew Jolliffe, several of his school fellows, as the reader knows, had been spectators of all that took place; and there was no difficulty in arriving at the truth; and so it came out that that wicked boy Zachary Watts, fearing lest his father should punish him if he heard the true state of the case, had gone home with a lie on his tongue, had persuaded his foolish parent that

Andrew was the person to blame, and had even induced his father to keep the matter secret for a time, because as he alleged, *he* did not wish to return evil for evil, and get Andrew into fresh trouble.

When Mr. Warlingham ascertained these facts, he determined that in justice to the other boys he could not allow Zachary Watts to remain any longer in Yateshull School: and therefore in spite of Andrew's intreaties that he might be spared, he was expelled.

"If I had any hopes of him," said Mr. Warlingham, "I would not refuse your request; but to retain such a hardened liar among you, would do him no good, and might be the means of corrupting some of you."

So Zachary was turned out of the school in disgrace: a measure which hurt his father's vanity so much, that he immediately left the Church, and joined himself to the dissenters. In the hope of paining Mr. Warlingham, he was not afraid to peril his own soul! Surely persons who so act, will be found speechless in the Judgment-day!

Let us now turn to a more pleasing subject,—Andrew's recovery.

Some months passed away before our patient sufferer was seen at any distance from his grandmother's door, and they who met the thin pale-faced boy, tottering on his crutches, and not keeping his balance without difficulty, scarcely recognised him as the same frisking, frolicsome, laughing creature whom they had known as "Merry Andrew." But his general appearance seemed to improve as time went on, and before the year was over, his eyes were no longer sunken, nor his face ghastly.

Meanwhile he had become quite skilful in hat-making, and having been taught a new method of managing the straw by which plaiting is superseded, and the fabric rendered more durable, and impervious to wet, Andrew's hats became quite the fashion, and he had as many orders as he could execute.

Being nearly at the top of the school when his accident happened, he was a good scholar, and during his long confinement he had leisure not only to keep up the knowledge he had acquired, but even to improve himself

considerably. This was a fortunate thing, for the distance between the toll-house and the school, was too great for him to allow him, even after he was recovered, to walk there and back daily.

What a pity it is that so many boys and girls, when they once leave school, seem to think it quite unnecessary to take any further pains to learn! They remain satisfied with ignorance: the little which they once knew, is speedily forgotten, and before the time comes in which they are candidates for confirmation, they know no more of their Bible or catechism, than if they had never so much as heard of them; and though living in a christian land, and (in many cases) going to church regularly, they are little better than heathens. Such persons should reflect that God expects them to improve *all* their talents, and that therefore they will be judged hereafter for the use they have made of the knowledge which they got at school. They should remember that when they are able to read and write, they have got over the *drudgery* of learning, and that a very little pains bestowed

on themselves regularly, will make their further progress more and more easy; that to be so employed will be a means of keeping them out of idleness, and therefore out of sin, and that even if they think of nothing but bettering their worldly prospects, the plan which I recommend is the best, for in these days, when there are so many good scholars, the ignorant and ill-educated are sure to be thrown into the back ground.

But though Andrew could no longer go to school, there was one place from which he steadily resolved that nothing should keep him, so long as he could move at all, and that place, I need hardly say, was church. How wearily and drearily passed the Sundays, while he was yet too ill to be able to attend Divine worship, and what a happy day was that with him on which he revisited for the first time the courts of the Lord's House! Like holy David his soul had "a desire and a longing," to enter That House again, and he felt as if he could not rest till he returned thanks in the congregation, to Him who had dealt so mercifully with him.

And through the kindness of friends his earnest wishes were gratified. Every Sunday, for several months, kind old Mrs. Barnes, of the Priory Farm, as she passed the toll-house, in her pony-chaise, took him in, and conveyed him to church. And when he could walk better, another friend who had a cottage at the mid-way distance, insisted on his coming in to rest for half-an-hour or so, and thus made his journey easy to him. So of all days of the week Sunday was the happiest to Andrew. He got up early, hobbled away betimes to Sarah Higg's, took a long rest there and got into church by the time the singers were beginning their practice. For Andrew was very fond of music, and as he sat and listened to the sweet and solemn tones of the organ, and the clear and harmonious voices of the choristers, his mind, as he said, became more in tune with the sacred services in which he was about to join; he found himself better able to think of holy things, and to shut out the concerns of this world; he had leisure to reflect calmly on the events of the past week, and to consider how far he had

been living in God's faith and fear, and struggling with the faults of disposition, which he knew belonged to him.

When morning service was over, he did not return home, but went to dinner at the vicarage, for Mr. Warlingham made him welcome to a meal there every Sunday, in order that he might thus have the opportunity of attending church twice. His dinner ended, he went for half-an-hour before afternoon service to be catechized with other young persons, who had left school, but to whom the vicar offered this means of instruction.

I believe the same custom prevails in many places, *(it ought to prevail in all)*—and I trust that such of my readers, as are able to avail themselves of such a privilege, will not fail to do so. I have sometimes seen boys and girls who when they go out to service are too proud to attend the catechizing, because they do not like to be looked upon as *children.*

Now, in the first place there is nothing to be ashamed of, either in being a child, or in consenting to learn in company with persons who are younger than ourselves; but, in point

of fact, the catechizer will always adapt his questions to the knowledge of those whom he catechizes. And therefore though catechizing may be a very simple and easy matter, as addressed to the very young and ignorant, it may be made an exercise by which even the best educated, may be instructed and improved. Catechizing is the best of all methods of teaching. We may learn much from sermons, but they have this disadvantage, that during their progress the mind may wander, and thus the greater part of the instruction may be lost; or again, what the preacher says may be misunderstood; or it may pass away from the mind without any permanent impression being made, simply because our own ideas on the subject under discussion, are vague and inaccurate. But none of these things can happen with catechizing. At a sermon, inattention can be concealed, in catechizing it cannot; we *must* attend *then* to what is going on, or else how shall we be ready with an answer when it comes to our turn? We may misunderstand a sermon, and (ordinarily speaking), for *that* there is no

Let us now turn to a more pleasing subject,—Andrew's recovery.

Some months passed away before our patient sufferer was seen at any distance from his grandmother's door, and they who met the thin pale-faced boy, tottering on his crutches, and not keeping his balance without difficulty, scarcely recognised him as the same frisking, frolicsome, laughing creature whom they had known as "Merry Andrew." But his general appearance seemed to improve as time went on, and before the year was over, his eyes were no longer sunken, nor his face ghastly.

Meanwhile he had become quite skilful in hat-making, and having been taught a new method of managing the straw by which plaiting is superseded, and the fabric rendered more durable, and impervious to wet, Andrew's hats became quite the fashion, and he had as many orders as he could execute.

Being nearly at the top of the school when his accident happened, he was a good scholar, and during his long confinement he had leisure not only to keep up the knowledge he had acquired, but even to improve himself

considerably. This was a fortunate thing, for the distance between the toll-house and the school, was too great for him to allow him, even after he was recovered, to walk there and back daily.

What a pity it is that so many boys and girls, when they once leave school, seem to think it quite unnecessary to take any further pains to learn! They remain satisfied with ignorance: the little which they once knew, is speedily forgotten, and before the time comes in which they are candidates for confirmation, they know no more of their Bible or catechism, than if they had never so much as heard of them; and though living in a christian land, and (in many cases) going to church regularly, they are little better than heathens. Such persons should reflect that God expects them to improve *all* their talents, and that therefore they will be judged hereafter for the use they have made of the knowledge which they got at school. They should remember that when they are able to read and write, they have got over the *drudgery* of learning, and that a very little pains bestowed

and though dark masses of thunder cloud kept off the glare of the sun, the air was so sultry and oppressive, that Andrew felt walking more distressing to him than usual.

"It's well I'm not made of butter," said he, "or I'm sure I should melt before we got up the hill."

"And it's well we're not made of salt either," rejoined Harry, "for we shall soon have a pretty drenching, if we don't get under cover. See how it's raining over Cannock Chase."

"The hills will carry that storm away," replied Andrew. "I don't know why it is, but I've often noticed that though the thunder may be all round us, it hardly ever comes here. I'm not afraid to sit down a bit and rest, are you?"

"Oh no," said his friend, "let us get out of this dusty road, and sit on the hay-cocks yonder."

No sooner said than done: but on this occasion Andrew's weather-wisdom was altogether mistaken. They had not been seated more than a few minutes when a flash of

lightning, and a peal of thunder, with no great interval beteen them, made the boys look up, and then they observed that the high ground in the distance was no longer visible, so heavy was the rain which was approaching.

"We had better make the best of our way into the miller's cart-shed," said Andrew, "for the storm is close at hand. Ah! there's the wind, how it whirls the hay about. And now for a heavy drop or two of rain by way of sample, before it comes down by buckets-full."

They were soon under shelter.

"I'm glad we've got here," said Andrew, "for if Granny looks out of her window, she cannot miss but see us,—she can't mistake me and my crutches,—and she would be all on the fret, if she thought I was out in the storm. See, there she is!"

On seeing her the two boys shouted, and thus attracted her notice. As soon as she recognised them she appeared satisfied, for she immediately re-entered her cottage at the foot of the hill below them.

It was now beginning to rain hard, so Harry Martin piled some loose straw in a corner, and the boys sat down, and made themselves comfortable.

"Ah!" exclaimed Andrew with something of a sigh, as he looked towards the toll-house, if I was now as I used to be, we shouldn't be sitting here like old folks, afraid of the weather. The rain would have had hard work to catch us before we reached the bottom of the hill."

"It's a great trial for you, Merry," replied Harry, "and if I were crippled I am sure I should be more restless than you are."

"Harry you don't know,—you can't think —how restless and impatient I am. I know how wrong it is to repine, but there are times when I see all the boys running and playing about, and feel that the power of joining with them is gone for ever, that I could lie down and cry: aye, Harry, and I have done so when nobody has seen me; but I hope I shall never do so again."

"I do not think there are many of us to

whom the loss of a limb would be as great a privation as it is to you. You were always on your legs from morning to night."

"I *did* enjoy the blessing, Harry, while I had it. I don't think any one could have enjoyed it more; perhaps that was one reason why it was taken from me,—in order to make me feel Who it was that gave me the blessing, and to Whom alone it was owing that I ever had it: another reason no doubt was that I had not been thankful enough for it."

"I have often thought, Andrew, since this misfortune befell you, what a warning it is to myself to be grateful for God's mercies while I have them. We none of us value health enough while we have it. We do not think of the pains, and aches, and dangers, and accidents, which *might* come on us, but which are warded off from us continually through God's watchful care."

"No, Harry, we do not: nor yet of the dangers which health, and happiness, and freedom from discomfort bring with them."

"And worse still," continued Harry, "we are such poor weak creatures that even if at

times we feel these things, the impression seems to pass away, and to have very little real effect upon us. When such a misfortune as that which befell you occurs, we are startled and feel, for a short season, as if some such event might come upon ourselves, and so become more watchful; but we soon forget it, just as now, while the storm lasts, we think the thunder and lightning awful, but when it has cleared off we shall think no more about it."

"I suppose we shall not,—I mean I *fear* we shall not," replied Jolliffe, "but really I don't remember I was ever out in a worse storm than this: that last flash was dazzling. I wonder whether we are safe here: there is no iron about, is there?"

"We are as safe here as anywhere," said Harry Martin timidly, "for God's Providence is watching over us, and we have not got into a place where there is anything to conduct the lightning towards us, as we should if we were sitting beneath an ash-tree, or were walking with an umbrella over our heads. I have heard say that the safest place in a thunder

storm is away from trees or buildings of any kind, in the middle of a field for instance."

The storm was now increasing in violence, and the vividness of the lightning, with the crashing, rattling peal of thunder which followed instantaneously, showed that it was about to pass over them. The boys sat for same moments in silence, watching the progress of the tempest.

"You were speaking of health and happiness bringing dangers," observed Martin, as a lull in the storm gave him an opportunity of speaking once more, "and no doubt they do. But then, on the other hand, no one can look at you, Merry, and not see that trials and sufferings rightly borne bring comforts."

"You may well say that, Harry; I am sure in my gayest days, when they called me Merry Andrew, I never was so happy as I am now. I was light-hearted, it is true, but, as you know full well, I had often causes of sorrow and reproach in secret, and I had none of that calm peacefulness which I feel now."

"Andrew, do you remember our talk that evening after the wasps stung you?"

"Harry, I shall never forget it. It was you who first made me feel that I was seeking happiness in a wrong way, and laying up stores of future self-reproach: and that noise, and laughter, and fun, even when harmless, do not make happiness as I then supposed they did. Ah, Harry, you were a true friend to me!"

"I am glad if I was of use in helping you to undeceive yourself, but I am sure you would not have gone on long as you were going on then. Now I know you better, I see you would have had too much sense to do so."

"I am not sure of that. I was blinded by vanity, and the wish to be notorious, and I persuaded myself that I must needs go whereever my high spirits led me."

"Andrew, what a blessing those high spirits have been to you!"

"Yes, Martin, since I was taught to discipline them, not before. God gave them to me for a good purpose, but I made a bad use of them for a long while. I was very near getting into the way of making them the ex-

cuse for all I did wrong,—as if I was compelled by them, and could not help myself. I know better than that now, Harry. High spirits are a good servant, but a bad master. With God's blessing they carried me through many a weary hour of pain after my leg was taken off, and they still make things seem bright to me, which otherwise would be cheerless enough; — though I trust that I have a better source of comfort than they can afford. Oh, Harry, what a blessing it is, that my accident was of such a nature that it does not prevent me from being able to attend the ordinances of the Church! Nobody can imagine, who has not been in a long course of suffering what powers they have to soothe and comfort. I understand now what Mr. Warlingham means when he talks of the *privilege* of being allowed to go to church, and of what a loss we have in not having *daily* service. The more we avail ourselves of the opportunities which we have, the more we shall wish for; the more we enter into the spirit of the Church services, the less we shall value and set our minds upon the things which the world

loves best: and, as the Vicar said in his sermon this evening, the Spirit of Christ will abound in us more and more; and we shall be moulded into that form which God would have us, one and all, acquire, however various may be our tempers and dispositions."

"Then, Andrew, if you had the choice given you, you would not wish to be as you were a year ago, even though at that time you had the free use of your limbs?"

"No, Harry, that would I not," answered Jolliffe unhesitatingly, and he would have added more, but at that instant the place where they were sitting was illumined by a flash of lightning so vivid, that for the moment it blinded them, and thereupon followed a clap of thunder so loud and terrible, and so utterly unlike all that had preceded it, that the boys were quite stupified with fear, and before they had sufficiently recovered themselves to speak, they perceived a most suffocating and sulphureous stench.

Their first thought was that the cart-shed itself had been struck, their next, that if such had been the case, they could hardly have *escaped* with life.

"Oh how very awful!" exclaimed Harry Martin in great alarm, "What had we better do, Andrew?"

"Thank God for having spared us!" replied his companion clasping his hands in prayer.

"'From lightning and tempest, Good Lord deliver us!'" said Harry Martin reverently falling on his knees.

Then both were silent for a few moments.

"Had we not better move out of this shed into the field?" said Andrew taking up his crutches. "It may be safer, for there is iron about this cart, and we shall only get wet."

Harry helped his friend out of the shed. They were at this time at the top of the hill at the foot of which Yateshull is situated, and had hitherto been looking down towards the river.

"Something has been struck,—a thunderbolt has fallen somewhere, depend upon it!" exclaimed Harry, "I wonder where it fell." And he began to look round.

He had not far to look. The shed in which they had taken shelter was built about a hun-

dred yards in advance of an old windmill, composed entirely of wood, and which happened to be in rather a dilapidated condition: the entrance to the shed being turned from the mill, that edifice had been wholly out of sight while they remained under cover: but the first thing that caught their eyes as they turned round to look for the spot which had been the scene of the electric explosion, were two of the sails of the windmill lying shattered on the ground.

"No wonder the noise was so terrible!" said Andrew. "What a merciful escape we have had to be so near, and yet be spared! And what a mercy, too, that it has happened on a Sunday, when there was nobody there, and not on a week-day when the miller would have been at work. If the lightning had struck it this time yesterday, no doubt Price would have been killed. Well, I think you had better go and tell him what has happened, I can manage to get home by myself." But Harry made no answer: his attention had been occupied by something else.

"Look there, Andrew," said he, suddenly

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pointing to a portion of the roof of the mill. "What's that? Isn't it smoke? I'm afraid it is."

"Aye, and it is too!" exclaimed Andrew in alarm.

"Are you sure it is not steam, or mist from the rain?" inquired Harry Martin, who was a very cautious boy for his years.

"Oh no, no, no!" cried Andrew hastily. "That is no steam, see how it's thickening! and there! look! there's a light by the window. The thunder-bolt has set the mill on fire. Run, Harry, and see if the door is open!"

"No, no," cried Harry, "we must not open the door, for if the fire is at the top of the mill, a rush of air let in from the bottom would set it all in a blaze in a moment. Do you stand here and watch, while I run down and alarm the neighbours. The storm seems passing away, and the rain will prevent the fire gaining head."

Away ran Harry, shouting "Fire, Fire!" as loud as he could, and speedily the whole village was alarmed, and in confusion; but, as usually happens in such cases, much preci-

ous time was lost because nobody knew what to do. There was a fire engine in the village, but the person who had the key of the place where it was kept, was not to be found, so there was a further delay caused by the necessity of breaking the door open. Then it was discovered that the hose, or leathern pipes for conveying the water, were out of order. And there was the difficulty of procuring water at the top of the hill. And the miller had walked to see his sister, who lived some miles off. And, in short, everything went wrong, so that long before any efficient help was at hand, the upper part of the mill was in flames.

As Andrew stood watching where Harry had left him, he saw the smoke growing more and more dense, and issuing at some fresh aperture every moment. Then the glass in the windows began to crack, and then a long, narrow flame shot out of the opening. The wood-work was speedily in a blaze, and a current of air being admitted, there was nothing to check the progress of the devouring element. The whole edifice being dry and combustible to the greatest degree, there was

nothing to oppose the slightest obstacle to the fury of the flames;—plank after plank gaped and let in a fresh body of air, so that in a very few minutes after the fire broke out of the upper window, the whole edifice was in flames from top to bottom. The fire engine was useless; the rain, though it came down in torrents, produced not the slightest effect on the conflagration; the hissing, roaring, and crackling were soon brought to an end by a loud crash; and there was an end of the old wind-mill.

All this time Merry Andrew had been standing in the midst of a drenching rain, which had wet him through and through; but the excitement of the time was such, that few even of those whose dispositions were less eager than Andrew's could have retured home before they had seen the result. But even when the fire was over he was not allowed to make his escape. As the heavy shower passed away, fresh crowds of neighbours came flocking to the spot, and to group after group in succession Andrew was expected to tell all he had seen. All were so full of wonder, and

curiosity, and alarm that they had no consideration for the poor one-legged boy; and when, after standing for a couple of hours in his wet things, he retured home, pale, and exhausted, and weary, and shivering with cold, there were some who thought him quite cross and selfish for not staying to give them a full and particular account "all how and about it."

How few of us there are who are thoughtful enough about each other! We would not, perhaps, *knowingly* do a selfish thing, but we do not discipline our minds so as to guard against gratifying ourselves at the cost of others, when the sacrifice on their parts is less obvious. True unselfishness can never be found where persons allow themselves to act on what is called the "spur of the moment.' To be really unselfish we must have acquired the *habit* of considering others first, and ourselves last in all things,—small things as well as great.

Becky Jolliffe was quite alarmed at her

grandson's exhausted state when he got home. And no wonder: the mere standing upon his crutches for so long a time would have wearied out a stronger person than he; but, in addition to this, his teeth chattered as if he was in an ague fit. Her thankfulness that he had not been struck by the lightning was superseded for the time by anxiety about his actual condition.

"You have got a chill all over you," said she, "I can see in your face that you have caught your death of cold. You must go to bed directly."

Much to the old woman's surprise, her grandson made no objection to her proposition, and he began to strip off his dripping clothes while she warmed his bed and prepared him a hot cup of tea.

Andrew was so worn out, that almost the moment he got warm again he fell asleep. But his sleep was neither wholesome nor refreshing, and when at the end of an hour or two he woke, his mouth was all parched, his face was flushed, and his hands were burning. By and bye he dropped off into a doze, from

which he started with some exclamation about the burning mill, and an intreaty that they would not pour the water from the fire-engine down his back. Ten minutes afterwards he was tossing the clothes off his bed and declaring it was so hot that he could not lie in it. This was evidently the commencement of a severe feverish attack; and by morning his restlessness and difficulty of breathing had so much increased, that Rebecca Jolliffe lost no time in sending for the doctor. In spite, however, of all that Mr. Cooper's skill could do, Andrew's complaint proceeded from bad to worse. Inflammation set in upon the lungs, and for several days he was in the greatest danger.

But it pleased God to spare him, this time also, from such a sudden summons. The symptoms which caused most immediate alarm passed away, and he rose from his bed once more. Still he looked delicate, and a cough remained of which he thought little, but which filled his grandmother with alarm. She knew the sound but too well. It had made her a widow and childless.

Summer passed away, and autumn was advancing. The harvest was over; the woods were becoming bright with the reds and yellows of the decaying foliage: the wild flowers bloomed no longer; the winds blew sharp and fresh; the glory of the year was gone. All that kindness and attention could do for Andrew had been done, but he had made no further progress towards recovery. He was not worse, but he was no better. He had neither gained flesh nor strength; the cough was not very troublesome, but there it was. Something seemed to be exhausting him, for lassitude crept over him by day, and profuse perspirations weakened him at night. He could no longer go to church as he used to do, and Mr. Warlingham began to visit him more frequently at home. He was still able to ply his trade, but he could not sit so long at it as formerly, on account of the pain in his side, and some of his customers complained that the work was not as firmly and neatly done as formerly.

Winter came on with its frost and snow; Advent and Christmas were celebrated, and

once more the world entered on a new year. It was a time of happy re-union among friends, and occasionally of cheerful hospitality among neighbours, but Andrew never left his chair by the fire-side. He was pale and wan, with sunken cheeks, and an altered voice. His eyes looked bright, and there was a spot of colour upon each cheek, but these were the tokens not of health, but of the disease which was sapping his life. Yet he talked as if he should be better by and bye, when spring came on, and the air was warmer, and frost and snow had passed away.

And the air grew warmer, and frost and snow disappeared, and the trees put forth their tender leaves, and the fields were clothed with verdure, and every copse, and thicket, and hedge-side were enamelled with blue-bells, and primroses, and all the bright jewelry of the early year, but still Andrew's strength revived not: the air seemed close and oppressive to him, and he was too weak to wander into the fields. His Heavenly Father was gradually leading him home, and bringing thither through paths of pain and suffering,

though as yet he knew not their termination, nor understood how, through a long course of years, the events of his life had been so directed as to prepare him by little and little for an early grave.

He was no great talker, and perhaps the anxiety which he saw growing more and more visible on his grandmother's brow induced him, when he did speak, to talk of himself and his prospects of recovery more cheerfully than he actually felt. He often concealed sharp pain lest the knowledge of it should distress her. He thought of her more than of himself. It is the peculiar character of his disease that it inspires hope rather than destroys it, and he was young, and knew little of maladies and their progress; and the love of life is strong in us all, and no one as yet had ever directly told him that his own was not likely to be protracted. So, though at times he felt misgivings and apprehensions about his state, he did not speak of them, nor as yet did his mind dwell much upon them, for his change for the worse was imperceptible from

day to day, and we are not apt to see as strongly as others do the changes which take place in us. But the truth was about to be brought before him.

One day, about Easter time, when long, heavy-hearted Lent was over, and the outward world had put on a face of gladness,—thus harmonizing with the Church's joy in her risen Lord,—the air was so soft and fresh that even poor sick Andrew was tempted forth to enjoy it, and he asked his grandmother to place a chair for him in a sheltered nook in the garden facing the south. He found it a hard matter to use his crutches even for that short distance, for his skin was grown very tender, and he was exceedingly weak. However he contrived to creep along, and when seated felt quite revived, and he enjoyed the humming of the bees, and the smell of the stocks and wall-flowers.

Seldom a day passed by but some of his kind-hearted school-fellows would come and visit him, and cheer him with their presence

and conversation. And it was as great a pleasure to them to come to him, as it was to him to see them.

On the occasion to which I allude, Johnny Drew, (one of the least boys in the school, as the reader already knows) was passing down the road, and to his surprize saw Andrew sitting in the garden. He opened the wicket-gate, and ran up to him.

"Oh Merry! how glad I am to see you out of doors again. Are you better? You look very bad?"

"No, Johnny, not worse than usual. I hope I shall be better again before long."

"I'm sure I hope so too," answered Johnny affectionately.

"And how are you all getting on at home?" asked Andrew, who was always glad to avoid talking about himself.

"Pretty much as usual," replied Johnny, "only mother has been so put about with hearing of Zachary Watts' disgrace. She says it is the first time that any of her family have lost their good name: you know mother and Joseph Watts are cousins."

"But what has Zachary been doing?"

"Oh! haven't you heard? He and Ned Falkener have been caught stealing at the shop. Mrs. Sherratt has missed cheese, and oranges, and cakes, and all manner of things besides for some time past, but never could think how they went. At last she observed that the goods always disappeared on Saturday evenings, when she used to go and drink tea at her brother's after the shop was shut. Well, she couldn't think how it could be managed, for she always carefully fastened the shop door, and it never seemed to have been disturbed, and besides, you know, Sally Dawes lives just opposite, and *she* would have seen if anybody had tried to break in. But she was resolved to find it out, both who robbed her, and how they got in, and she hit upon such a clever scheme, Andrew?"

"What was it Johnny?"

"Why the Saturday before last, just before she went out as usual, she sprinkled fine, dry sand all over the floor of the shop, and indeed all about her back premises."

"Well," asked Andrew eagerly, "and what *happened*?"

"Just what she had expected. She found her shop had been entered, and she was able to trace upon the sand two sets of footsteps: one a boy's, whom the tracks shewed to have been put through a little window in her back pantry, and who must have afterwards opened her back door to let in an older person."

"But the shape of the footsteps could not tell her the names of the thieves."

"No, Andrew; but she was very sharp about that. She went directly to John Hoby, and when he had seen the marks, he said he felt pretty sure that the man's shoes *had* been made by him, and that he was certain the boy's *had not*, for that he always put his nails into the soles in some particular way, and the nails in the *man's* soles only were set in that way. And then he took a careful measure of the impressions in the sand."

"Well, at any rate, then, they had learned a good deal."

"Yes; and when John Hoby went home and looked at his book where he keeps his measurements, he felt pretty sure that the man must have been that good-for-nothing

fellow, rat-catcher Falkener, who is always shackling about, or poaching, or doing something wrong, for he had observed that the soles must have been a good deal worn at the heels, and Ned Falkener walks very much on his heels."

"Sharp enough of Master Hoby,!" exclaimed Andrew, his pale face flushing with the interest which the story created. "But how was he able to fix suspicion on Zachary?"

"Why that was not difficult," answered Drew, "for he knew that Zachary was always in Ned's company, or at least whenever he could contrive it; and he knew that he made for all the boys hereabouts except for Zachary, whose father, being a shoemaker, would of course make for his son."

"But how did they know that the theft *must* have been committed by somebody living near?"

"Because whoever was guilty of it must have known Mrs. Sherratt's habit of going out at a certain hour on Saturday evenings."

"Oh to be sure! I see," said Andrew. "But how was it brought home to them?"

"I will tell you directly," replied Johnny Drew, "but I see my little brother Sam in the lane yonder. He has no business so far from home. He is too young," added Johnny, with a tone of great importance, "to be left without anybody to take care of him."

Andrew could not help smiling, for Johnny himself was only bigger than his brother by half-a-head. Little Sam was speedily brought into the garden, and Johnny proceeded.

"Well, Mrs. Sherratt and John Hoby kept it all a secret that they had made any discovery, or had any suspicion: but in the course of last Saturday afternoon, Hoby and Stocks, the constable, came to the shop separately, and were concealed there by Mrs. Sherratt. At the usual time she shut up her shop, and went out, leaving the two men within. As she went out she observed Zachary Watts at a distance watching her, as, no doubt, he had often done before. Well, as soon as it was quite dark, a bit of crooked wire, or something of the kind, was pushed through a small hole in the pantry window; the fastening was undone; the window was opened; Zachary

was pushed through it; he immediately opened the back door and let in rat-catcher Ned: as soon as they had filled their pockets Hoby and Stocks darted from their hiding-place and secured them; they were taken the same night before Justice Burns; and yesterday morning they were sent off to Stafford gaol."

If Johnny Drew had been old enough to understand how little able to bear excitement of any kind his friend was, he would not have told Andrew this sad tale, which his grandmother, knowing how much it would shock him, had carefully kept from him; but Johnny was not to blame, for he knew no better. The effect, however, upon poor emaciated Andrew was very prejudicial; for when he attempted to speak, he was seized with the most violent fit of coughing he had ever experienced. His face became flushed, his eyes filled with tears, he gasped for breath, and eventually sunk back in his chair in a state of the greatest exhaustion, while his countenance seemed as fixed as if he were actually dying.

The two little boys were very much fright-

ened. The youngest began to cry; but Johnny, with more presence of mind, ran into the house and brought a cup of water. By degrees Andrew revived.

"Oh what ever shall we do?" exclaimed Johnny, "shall I run for help?"

Andrew was too much exhausted to answer, but made a sign which the little boy understood as a prohibition, so he sat down quietly on a stone beside him, looking earnestly and fearfully in Andrew's face. After a while he laid his hand on the sufferer's knee, and said in a piteous tone, "Don't die, Merry, don't die!"

"No, Merry," added Sam, "don't die yet awhile; please don't If you die there will be nobody to make our hats, or...."

"Hush, Sam; don't you see he is getting better?"

Andrew turned his languid eyes upon them, and making an exertion, drank some more water. In a few minutes he seemed to come to himself again, and was much as usual.

"Why did you think I was dying, Johnny?" he asked after awhile.

"Because you looked so very, very bad; and because so many folks say you must die."

"Who say so, Johnny?" inquired Andrew, his pale face flushing once more.

"Oh, I don't know; everybody. Phil Dilwyn said yesterday, when he heard us talking of you, that you would never be Merry Andrew, or Jolliffe jolly-face again."

"Are you sure of that, Johnny?"

"Oh yes; for he said Mr. Cooper had told his father that you could not last long. But do last, Merry, as long as ever you can. Don't die yet, Merry. We can't spare you; 'deed we can't."

Andrew made no reply, for his tongue seemed to cleave to his gums; his heart beat so violently that it appeared to knock against his ribs, and he broke out into a cold sweat.

At this moment Rebecca Jolliffe came through the wicket, and seeing him looking so ill, at once attributed his exhaustion and paleness to over-fatigue, and therefore she immediately sent the two little boys away, and helped her grandson back to his bed in the cottage.

"Yes," Andrew said, "I am tired, Granny, and should like to be quite quiet for a bit."

He threw his arms round her neck, and kissed her as she bent over him, but not a word did he speak on the subject which now occupied all his thoughts. Whatever his own trials were, he would not if he could help it, increase her's: of that he was quite determined.

Rebecca left the room, and closed the door after her; and then and not before, Andrew's self-possession gave way, and covering his face with the bed-clothes, he burst into a flood of tears. How long he wept I know not, but the vent which had been thus given to his emotions was a great relief to him; and his state of extreme excitement, subsided into one of calmness and composure. Then he took his Prayer Book from off the table beside him, and slowly read to himself, the anthem in the Burial-service, applying it to his own case as he went on.

"Man that is born of a woman hath but a short time to live, and is full of misery. He cometh up and

is cut down, like a flower; he fleeth as it were a shadow, and never continueth in one stay.

"In the midst of life we are in death: of whom may we seek for succour, but of Thee, O Lord, who for our sins art justly displeased?"

"Yet, O Lord God most holy, O Lord most mighty, O holy and most merciful Saviour, deliver us not into the bitter pains of eternal death.

"Thou knowest Lord, the secrets of our hearts; shut not Thy merciful ears to our prayer; but spare us, Lord most holy, O God most mighty, O holy and merciful Saviour, Thou most worthy Judge eternal, suffer us not at our last hour, for any pains of death, to fall from Thee."

When Andrew had offered up this most solemn prayer, he found himself better able to reflect on the announcement that had so suddenly been made to him, that his friends were expecting his death. His first thought was that it had been very cruel of them to keep him in ignorance of his real state, and for this he blamed his grandmother, and the vicar especially.

But a little more reflection showed him that he had been unjust, "Mr. Warlingham," said he to himself, "has for a long time past

spoken of my recovery as doubtful, and of my state as precarious, and, now I think of it, the prayers he has used for me, and the Psalms and Scriptures he has read with me, have been rather applicable to one who was not likely to recover, than to one who would probably get well. I ought to have thought of this. And then I ought to have understood Granny's hints and manner. She has never said a word to imply that I should get better. But somehow I never brought it home to myself that there was no hope for me. I do blame them for not speaking out more plainly."

But Andrew was wrong in this matter. The disease under which he laboured, had not, till within a day or two, assumed a form which made the possibility of recovery hopeless, and therefore his friends would not have been justified in telling him that he could not recover. He had long been in a state to justify great anxiety and apprehension; but the malady was not in an active state, and till it became so, though his condition was precarious, it was not *hopeless*. It was only after

his last visit, that Mr. Cooper had declared his belief that Andrew's life was drawing to its close; and of this fact Mr. Warlingham fully intended to apprize the sufferer; but, as has been seen, an accidental circumstance had revealed to Andrew suddenly and without preparation, what it was the vicar's purpose to disclose more gradually and gently. For although Andrew was very ill, there was no likelihood that he would die immediately: the probability was that he would continue to linger on for weeks, or even months.

But though Andrew blamed his friends for not having spoken more plainly to them, he never doubted their kind intentions. "Perhaps after all," he continued to himself, "my case is not so very bad; I have got over the accident to my leg, why may I not get the better of this cough? Still something tells me that I never shall. At any rate no harm can come of being prepared for the worst. And yet it seems hard that I should be taken so early, I am so young, and, in spite of the loss of my limb, I am so happy, and it will be so sad to part from Granny, and many, many more,

and to be laid in the grave, and see the light of day no more! But then again this is a wrong feeling, for I ought not to have a wish of my own, but to leave all to God. I continually pray that His will may be done, and yet here am I thinking of my own will, instead of His. I will try and prepare myself for death. And Oh! how awful does it seem, now that it is really coming. I have often thought of it before, but never felt it, no, not even in the marl-pit,—so near as now. What will become of me when I die? where will my soul be? Will God for Christ's sake own me as one of His children at the last day? my life has not been long, but even in its short space how continually have I broken His Laws and offended Him!" And then Andrew Jolliffe began to examine himself, and think over the many ways in which he had offended God.

"Let me remember what the vicar said to me, only a few days ago about searching into my own heart and trying myself. 'Andrew,' said he, 'you know that when you were born into the world, you were a child of wrath,

you had not only no ground on which to expect mercy when you came to die, but you were already condemned as a sharer in the guilt of Adam's sin. As partaker of his nature you were doomed to be a partaker of his punishment. But God, who is rich in mercy, opened a way of escape for you. For His son Jesus Christ's sake, who died on the cross for man's redemption, the Almighty was pleased to enter into a covenant or agreement with you. Of that agreement your baptism was the token, pledge, and seal. Then, God on His part forgave you your past sins whether many or few, and brought you within His Church and fold, out of which no one can hope for salvation. He made you His own child by adoption. He, as it were, re-made you,—He made you a new creature, causing you to be born again of Water and of the Holy Ghost. He gave you the promise of assistance from His blessed Spirit, He put you altogether in the way to be saved, and engaged that if you kept your part of the agreement you should be saved. And now Andrew,' I remember he continued, 'consider

carefully how you have kept, and are keeping your part of the agreement. You know the things to which you were engaged; namely, that you would repent of your past sins; that you would believe all that is written in the Bible; that you would renounce and forsake sin of every kind, whether suggested to you by the devil, by your fellow-creatures, or by your own heart; and that you would keep God's holy will and commandments, and walk in the same all the days of your life.'"

These were the things, as Andrew remembered, (though they are here set down more fully, perhaps, than he could have stated them), which Mr. Warlingham had said to him, when he bid him search well and see how he was keeping his vows and agreement with God in Holy Baptism.

"I do believe my Bible, and all the Articles of the Christian Faith," reflected Andrew, "*as* the Church teaches them, and *because* she does. She is my mother, and whatever she says, to that would I hearken as an obedient child. But even here, as Mr. Warlingham too truly said, I fear I have not lived up to

my engagements. For if I *really* believed all that the Bible taught,—the resurrection of the dead,--the future judgment, and the life of the world to come,—I should have lived more carefully and holily than I have ever done. And if I have not kept this vow, which seems the easiest, how miserably have I failed in keeping those which are the hardest! How often have I done what is wrong, through fear of being laughed at! How often have I forgotten that God sees me at all times. How often have I been negligent about my prayers, and at church! How often have I been idle about reading my Bible! How often have I been greedy, and selfish, and passionate, and proud, and careless! In years past, I have told lies, and used bad words, and encouraged others to do bad things. Oh how ashamed I am of myself! How the thought of my sins pains me now!" And Andrew hid his face in his hands, and wept once more at the thought of what he rightly judged were many and great offences; though Andrew, in the opinion of the world, would have passed for a very good

boy. But the Bible and the world have different standards of right and wrong. Happy they who, like Andrew, do not shrink from looking into their own hearts, and who do not attempt to gloss over and excuse what there they find witnessing of sin against God!

When Andrew thus reflected on the number and greatness of his transgressions, he felt how merciful God had been towards him in not cutting him off in the midst of sin and folly, and he saw that it was the same loving-kindness which now gave him a fresh call to repentance and preparation for his latter end.

The reader must not suppose that Andrew had been up to this time careless about his religious duties. On the contrary, from the period when his accident had befallen him, he had given more serious thought to that subject which is alone of importance. He was trying to remember his Redeemer in the days of his youth; and months of pain, and languor, and confinement,—frequent solitude,—constant opportunities of reading,—and Mr. Warlingham's advice and instructions had

kept the current of his thoughts in the same channel, and thus gradually and imperceptibly the merry-hearted, high-spirited boy, was being moulded and formed into that one character to which all who are faithful soldiers of Christ Crucified sooner or later attain. He was becoming imbued with the spirit of Him Who bore the cross, and acquiring those tempers, and that frame of mind in which "to live is Christ, and to die is gain."

Still he had hitherto looked on death as a distant thing, and, therefore, now that it seemed at hand in all its stern reality, he felt more strongly than he had ever yet done, the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and his anxiety became more intense to make his peace with God before he should go hence and be no more seen.

His conscience told him that he had not kept his baptismal vows as he ought to have done, that the purity and whiteness of his baptismal robe were specked and stained with the spots and blemishes of sins, negligences, and ignorances: his fears told him that he was about to appear in the presence of that Judge

Who will render to every man according to the deeds done in the body, whether they be good, or whether they be evil: but his hopes told him also that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin, that there was mercy with Him for all who come lowlily unto Him in penitence and amendment of life, and that that mercy was available even for those who, like himself, had failed to keep their part of the agreement with God in the holy Sacrament of Baptism.

It was this thought, and the consideration that the strong desire he felt within him to be enabled to repent acceptably was a proof that the Holy Spirit (through Whom alone come holy desires or just works) had not cast him off, which consoled him and supported him at this trying time, and enabled him to contemplate with a calmness which surprised himself, the change which he now felt to be awaiting him.

Andrew, as we have observed before, was no great talker on religious subjects. He felt the diffidence and humility of youth, as well as that want of fluency in expressing

himself, which is almost always experienced by those whose education is limited, and which, through a natural reserve of disposition, remains even with many well-educated persons throughout their lives. And besides this, the progress of his disease made much speaking as exhausting as it was prejudicial to him, and, indeed, in no long time it was all he could do to listen with attention to the prayers which the Vicar offered up at his bed-side, though Mr. Warlingham was very considerate, and very careful not to weary him.

Oh that people would think more frequently upon the difficulties which the weakness, and pain of a dying bed throw in the way of those who trust to that time and place as the fittest in which to make peace with God!

Andrew was no great talker, but so far as he knew how, he opened his whole heart to his kind friend Mr. Warlingham, and received from him such spiritual advice and consolation as his case seemed to require during the remainder of his pilgrimage through this world. He found great comfort, too, in the presence of Harry Martin, who would sit by his bed-

side for hours together, and read to him from time to time as he was able to listen. As for Rebecca Jolliffe, his grandmother, her one thought was how she could best minister to his interests, spiritual and temporal. So that Andrew was continually making the grateful acknowledgment that his trials were so mercifully lightened to him, that he would be without excuse if he did not patiently bear his burden.

And now was shewn the goodness of God in giving to Andrew that natural flow of high spirits and cheerfulness, which had at times been a snare to him, but which, under his present circumstances, and controlled by the discipline of religion, enabled him to undergo a very lingering and protracted course of suffering, in a manner which not only preserved him from fretfulness and repining, but was of the greatest comfort to those who nursed him. Well and wisely had Mr. Warlingham replied to Mr. Dilwyn, when, years before, the latter had lamented the exuberance of Andrew's spirits. "Providence," said he, "does nothing in vain. God would not have bestowed this

particular disposition upon him, if He had not determined that it would be needful to him. *Our* duty is to teach him to use his gift, and not to abuse it."

I have already said that the nature of Andrew's complaint was such that his powers of talking were soon exhausted,—he could not speak often, or if he did, he was sure to suffer from it; and there were many days, especially as he grew weaker, when he hardly opened his lips at all. So I have no interesting conversations to record, and will gladly spare the reader the recital of Andrew's sufferings, which, as the malady made progress, became very great. He was racked with an incessant cough, which shook his poor feeble frame to pieces; his emaciation became so extreme that his bones quite pierced his skin, and made every joint sore; and while at times he was tortured with a burning thirst, which nothing could allay, at others he was labouring under a sense of oppression and difficulty of breathing which were almost unendurable.

Among the few ornaments which were to be found in Becky Jolliffe's cottage was an old-

fashioned cupboard, on the inside of the door of which either she, or some former possessor, had pasted some of those Scripture prints which are so often carried about by pedlars, and which in our part of the country are not among the least popular of the multifarious treasures of their pack.

Of the prints so displayed, the largest, being that which occupied the centre of the wooden panel, was one of our Blessed Lord upon the Cross. Now the cupboard was fixed in a corner of the room, but the door, when open, was in a line with the foot of Andrew's bed. So when Andrew had noticed this, he begged that the cupboard door might always stand open, and thus, as he lay in bed, his eyes fell upon a representation—such as it was—of the most awful event which the world has ever seen, but which, in its awe and sadness, is yet full of comfort to the sinner.

The picture was rudely drawn, and coarsely coloured, but it served to a blessed purpose. It kept continually before Andrew's mind the thought of his Saviour's sufferings, and thus supported him in his own. It was a comment

upon, and helped him to realize that affecting passage in the office for the Visitation of the Sick, which he had now, from having heard it so frequently, learned by heart. "There should be no greater comfort to Christian persons, than to be made like unto Christ, by suffering patiently adversities, troubles, and sicknesses. For He Himself went not up to joy, but first He suffered pain; He entered not into His glory before He was crucified. So truly our way to eternal joy is to suffer here with Christ; and our door to enter into eternal life is to suffer here with Christ; that we may rise again from death, and dwell with Him in everlasting life."

And thus, when Andrew had passed a sleepless night, he would lift up his eyes, and what he saw before him would suggest the thought how far less his own trial was than that of Him Who had not where to lay His head,—Who passed whole nights in prayer, and Whose agony at night in the garden was, as it were, great drops of blood falling to the ground. When, through long confinement to his bed, and his increasing emaciation, his skin

rubbed off in several places, and he suffered greatly from the soreness of the wound, he would repeat those appropriate words of the Psalmist, "Hear my prayer, O Lord, and let my crying come unto Thee. Hide not Thy face from me in the time of trouble: incline Thine ear unto me when I call: O hear me, and that right soon. For my days are consumed away like smoke, and my bones are burnt up, as it were, a fire-brand. For the voice of my groaning my bones will scarce cleave to my flesh. My days are gone like a shadow, and I am withered like grass. But Thou, Lord, shalt endure for ever, and Thy remembrance throughout all generations." And then he would seek after patience by contemplating Him Who, upon the sharp and bitter cross, was "poured out like water, and all His bones put out of joint."—When parched with fever and racked with thirst, he would endeavour to feel thankfulness that in the latter point he was made partaker of his Saviour's sufferings, "though," as he was wont to whisper to himself, "what is *my* thirst, compared with the thirst of the Cross?" And by and bye,

when his sufferings grew more intense, he found that the representation of his crucified Redeemer still brought the thoughts to his mind which best enabled him to submit unmurmuringly. "Surely, since He bore so much for me, I may well bear what He thinks fit to lay upon me. *He* suffered, the just for the unjust. All *my* sufferings are deserved. *I* receive but the due reward of my deeds, but *He* did nothing amiss."

Thus it turned out, that what we should call a mere accidental circumstance,—the picture pasted on the cupboard door,—became, in his sickness, a source of great comfort to poor Andrew. So mercifully are the most trifling events (as they seem to us) disposed by our All-good and gracious Father for the welfare of those who love Him!

But we must hasten to bring our tale to a close. As our sufferer's disease advanced, his cough became incessant, so that it hardly gave him any respite night or day; and therefore, during the brief intervals of repose, it was necessary to leave him as quiet as possible.

He was too much exhausted to speak more than a few words, and he could not bear to be read to. What a happy thing it was that, ere yet his complaint had made much progress, he had been leading a life of prayer and self-examination, and had deferred nothing to the last! If he had then put off giving attention to his religious duties, the probability is, he would never have been able to attend to them at all. As it was, though unable to listen as he could have wished to prayers and passages of Holy Scripture, he was able to live on placidly and calmly in his own thoughts, though death was close at hand. He knew many passages of the Psalms by heart, and these he would repeat to himself silently from time to time, and as he was often too weary, or his mind not clear enough to enable him to say his prayers at his accustomed hours, he made it a rule to say them whenever he could.

Thus weeks passed away,—for his trial was a most protracted one; and as they passed, he grew weaker and weaker, but still his cheerful, thankful, patient spirit remained unaltered, and so, in God's good time, his time of trial

ended, the hour of his release came, and He Who, while on earth, suffered the little children to come unto Him and forbade them not, now took Andrew to Himself, to be with Him, as we humbly trust, eternally. After a violent fit of coughing, the weary sufferer sunk into a gentle sleep, and when he woke, it was in that place where weariness and suffering are known no more.

"I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them."

It was a calm bright evening at the end of harvest, when Andrew's wasted remains were borne to the grave. The wheat was being gathered into the garners,—safely housed till the time should come round again, when after being buried in the soil, it should spring forth once more into life and vigour. So, amid their grief, remembered they who met the loaded wains upon the road as the funeral procession winded its way from the toll-house

to Yateshull church-yard; and the thought spoke consolation to the ear of faith.

I have called it a procession, but it scarce deserved the name, for the four bearers, with Rebecca Jolliffe, and a female neighbour who had helped to lay him in his coffin, were the only attendants at Andrew's funeral, for Rebecca was the last survivor of her family, and though many of her neighbonrs would have been glad to offer their services, they kindly abstained from doing so, as being unwilling to increase an expense which the poor childless widow was now ill able to bear.

Being harvest-time, the village street was almost deserted, and even of Andrew's companions,—of those who had joined his sports, and madé him their friend and play-fellow, and given him the once-prized name of Merry Andrew, scarce one was to be seen. They were busy gleaning in the harvest-field; but it is to be hoped that the tolling of the distant bell, brought solemn thoughts into their minds, and forced them, for the time at least, to reflect that it behoved them also to be ready, for that their turn might be the next.

It is lamentable to think how often the irreverent crowding, and the thoughtless remarks of rude, ill-taught children, who follow a funeral *as a sight*, and come pushing, running, and sometimes even shouting into a a church-yard, add to the trials of the mourners on such melancholy occasions. An offence of this sort was one which Mr. Warlingham never allowed to go unpunished, and therefore the last solemn rites of the Church were always conducted in an orderly manner at Yateshull, even when many children were present. But, as has been already said, at Andrew Jolliffe's funeral, there were hardly any spectators, and therefore a more than ordinary stillness and solemnity prevailed.

It was a touching sight to behold the aged grandmother, endeavouring to bear up with resignation, as she surrendered the last thing which was precious to her in this world: and still more so to see her sudden start and suppressed cry, when, as the coffin was lowered into the grave, the soil on one side (an accident of frequent occurrence) fell in, and partially obscured it from her view. No doubt

her thoughts reverted to the marl-pit, and all its fatal consequences: but he on whom the soil fell, now was beyond the reach of danger and pain, and his weeping relative soon recovered sufficient firmness to join in the thanksgiving that it had pleased God to deliver the last object of her cares and prayers out of the miseries of this sinful world.

And now the last prayers had been offered and the blessing spoken, and the mourners had left the church-yard, when the vicar returning from the church, to take, (as was his wont) a last look at the grave, before he quitted the sacred precinct, found Harry Martin weeping beside the remains of his departed friend.

"This is a great trial for you, Harry," said Mr. Warlingham kindly," "and I assure you I mourn with you most sincerely for Andrew's loss; but I trust what is loss to us, is eternal gain to him."

"Oh he was so affectionate, and so good, and so patient," sobbed forth Harry.

"And therefore," said the vicar, "he was

the more fit for the change which has awaited him. Whatever God has done, He has done for the best, both for him and for us. Think how much of trial, and trouble, and temptation, he has been saved in being thus early called to his rest."

"I *had* thought of that Sir," replied Martin through his tears, "and perhaps if one could make up one's mind to think so, it is best to die young,—that is," he added, "if one lives in youth to God."

"No doubt it is, Harry; for the wise man saith, 'that honourable age is not that which standeth in length of time, nor that is measured by number of years. But wisdom is the gray hair unto men, and an unspotted life is old age.' And it was of one who so lived and died, that he beareth witness that 'He being made perfect in a short time, fulfilled a long time: for his soul pleased the Lord: therefore hasted He to take him away from among the wicked.'—You, if any one, have known Andrew Jolliffe, and have seen God's dealings towards him, and therefore you cannot doubt how kindly, graciously, God has

dealt with him. You have seen him a wild, high-spirited, undisciplined boy; and you have seem him gradually moulded and fashioned into a patient, devout, nay, I may say, exemplary Christian. He has been an example to us all, how completely it is possible to change our whole characters if only we seek God's help diligently, and watch carefully, and exert ourselves to the utmost. For *him* we have no cause, I verily believe, to shed tears, though they will flow," and here Mr. Warlingham's voice faltered, " as we think of all the many engaging points of his character, which attached him to us. He had long been living for another world; on that he had fixed his heart, and if he had any pangs in quitting this life, I think they arose not on his own account, but because he knew how lonely his poor grandmother would be without him. Well, Harry, we who loved him, must now for his sake, shew all the attention and kindness we can to her."

Considerate words these; and so far as Henry Martin was concerned, they did not fall to the ground, for, in after life, that open grave,

and the vicar's admonition as he stood beside it, would often recur to his mind, and excite him to renewed exertion in his Christian calling: but the concluding suggestion was made in vain, for Rebecca Jolliffe had little more occasion for the kindness and sympathy of friends.

Once or twice more, she was seen in her accustomed place in church, with such an appearance of decent mourning in her attire, as her poverty permitted her to procure; but she was shrunk and withered, and her step was feeble, and her body bowed. By Michaelmas it was said among her neighbours that she had that in her countenance, which shewed that she was not long for this world: and when Martinmas came round, the decaying leaves fell thick upon a new made grave, the last of a row of nine. Rebecca Jolliffe had been laid by her children's side; she was gone to them who could not return to her, and as we trust, will have her portion with them in a land where tears shall be wiped from off all faces, and sin, and sorrow, and death shall be known no more.

THE

PANCAKE BELL.

"Well, to be sure!" exclaimed Charley Salt, "I never could have thought of such a thing. Whatever else he might forget, I should never have expected Mr. Warlingham to forget anything about the Church."

"Why, what has he forgotten?" asked Harry Martin.

"He forgot that to day was Shrove Tuesday."

"Indeed?" said Philip Dilwyn, who had over-heard the conversation, "What makes you think so, Charley?"

"Why, just now, as I was coming down the Church lane, I met him, and says he to

me, 'Charley, my boy, what's the bell tolling for? Is Sally Dixon's baby dead?' 'Dead Sir,' says I, 'not that I know of. That's the Pancake-bell.'"

"Well, Charley, what did the Vicar say then?"

"Oh, he began to laugh, and declared he had forgotten all about it, but he added 'I ought to have remembered, for there is such a smell of frying all down the street.'"

"But, Charley, this only proves that he had forgotten about pancakes, or about ringing the bell, not that he had forgotten that it is Shrove Tuesday. I don't think he was likely to forget that."

"You may say what you will, but I shall always think it very odd that he who is so particular, about these kind of things and the Church services, should forget about Shrove-Tuesday."

"About pancakes you mean, Charley," said Harry Martin.

"Well, about pancakes, then. I'm sure it would not seem to me like Shrove-Tuesday, if we had not pancakes for dinner."

"Mr. Warlingham has other things to think of beside his dinner," observed Harry,

"Yes, but there was the sound of the bell to remind him: and he is always so strict, you know, about what the Church orders."

Charley Salt was still a little boy, and knew no better, or he would not have made such a strange remark as this. His companions laughed, and Philip Dilwyn said, "But the Church never enjoins us to eat pancakes."

"Then why does the church bell ring only on this day in the year, just at dinner time? and why does every body call it the Pancake Bell?"

"I believe Charley, that the bell was formerly tolled with a very different object, namely, to call people to church; not for the purpose of bidding them pour the batter into the frying-pan. The bell continued to toll, (perhaps as a witness against them) though folks ceased to come to church; and when the real reason why they were invited to come to church at this time was forgotten, ignorant persons took it into their heads that it had

some connexion with pancakes. Now, Harry, can you tell me why it is called Shrove-Tuesday?"

"No, Phil, but I can tell you why Charley Salt is hopping on one leg," answered Harry Martin laughing.

"Why?" asked Dilwyn.

"Because he is thinking that if he don't make haste home, he'll be too late for his dinner. He always hops that way when he is in a fidget, don't you Charley?"

"I'm as bad as the Vicar," cried Phil Dil, good-humouredly, "I was forgetting pancake-time too. Away with you, but if you've nothing particular to do this evening, call in again, and we'll go on with our talk."

The boys thanked their kind friend, and proceeded homewards. They were punctual to their appointment, for they were always glad to be with Phil Dil, and they often said to one another that they learned as much from being with him out of school-hours, as they did when he was hearing them their lessons in school.

"Now then, Charley," said Philip, let us *hear all* about it."

"Had they eaten up all the pancakes before you got home?"

"No," replied Charley, "but it was lucky for me that mother did not take me at my word, or no pancakes should I have had this day."

"Indeed? Why how came that about?"

"You shall hear, Phil. As soon as I got home, there I saw mother at the fire, with her frying-pan in one hand, and a fork in the other, and such a pile of pancakes ready made in a dish on the hearth! and every now and then she just touched the pancake she was making, with the fork, to prevent it sticking to the pan; and as soon as she did that, there was such a bubbling and fizzing, and sputtering, as if the pancake was quite comfortable, and didn't choose to be touched. But as soon as it was done on one side, 'Get out of my way, Charley,' says my mother, 'for I'm going to turn it in the pan,' and with that she gives the frying-pan a shake and a toss, and up flies the pancake half way to the ceiling, and then down it comes on its other side, into the pan, as neat and as flat as ....."

"As a pancake I suppose," observed Harry Martin, "well go on, we have all seen pancakes tossed."

"Harry, I must tell my own story my own way. I've seen pancakes tossed scores of times myself, but some how or other, I never thought much about the knack of doing it till to day: but when I saw mother so handy, and seeming to do it so easy—'Mother,' said I, 'let me have a toss?' 'you, Charley? why you'll tumble into the pan, and be made a fritter of.' 'Nay, mother,' I answered, 'I'm sure I could do it.' 'Well lad,' said my father, who had over-heard our talk, 'wait a bit, and when your mother has finished our pancakes, you shall make your own; you shall have as many as you can toss.' This was fine hearing wasn't it, Phil? how many do you think I tossed?"

Phil laughed and shook his head.

"Oh, it was a terrible job, Phil, I assure you, for I was so impatient, I wouldn't let mother shew me how to do it, and so I hadn't a chance, as indeed I ought to have considered. However, I set to work as bold as

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a lion, and I got on pretty well till the pancake was done on one side, 'Now then,' cried mother, 'it's time to turn it; take care, Charley.' Well, I was determined to be careful, and not to attempt to toss it as high as mother did, and so I didn't toss it at all, but only managed to slip it half out of the pan, and blacken it with the soot of the sides of the pan. There was a pretty laugh against me, you may be sure: but I took courage, and said if they would only give me another trial, I *thought* I could do it; for I wouldn't say I was *sure* this time. Mother didn't much like wasting the batter, but she gave me enough to make a little one, and sure enough I tossed it: but, Oh, Phil! instead of turning in the air as it ought to have done, and dropping exactly where it had sprung from, away it went, first up to the ceiling, and then down on the stone floor, and before I could stop him, our dog Bounce made a snap at it, and dragged it under the dresser. 'And so ends Charley's chance of a pancake for dinner!' cried my father. I was rather downcast at hearing that, but I felt I didn't deserve one,

because I wouldn't listen to my mother, when she wanted to teach me, and so I told her. And then she said she didn't mind the loss of the pancakes, if what had happened taught me to be less impatient; and that there were enough made for all, and Bounce should make his dinner off the two which I had spoiled."

"Well, Charley," observed Philip Dilwyn, "if they want a cook at Westminster School, you must not apply for the situation yet, or you'll come to disgrace."

"How so?" enquired Charley Salt.

"Why, I have heard Mr. Warlingham say that there is a curious old custom there, on this day. The College-cook, attended by the beadles, and other officers of the Abbey, enters the school, which is a very lofty room, and throws, or attempts to throw a pancake over an iron bar, which at the height of perhaps five and twenty feet from the ground, divides the upper, from the lower school. If he succeeds, he is applauded by clapping of hands. If he fails, he is hissed out of the school: but the boys get their holyday, notwithstanding."

"What a strange custom!" exclaimed Harry Martin.

"I have been told that in old times," said Philip, "that there was a still stranger, at Eton, for there, the College-cook was expected to fasten a pancake to a crow's leg, though how he was to catch the crow, I don't think I ever heard. I suppose he was to put some salt on his tail.—But now to go back again to what we were talking about before dinner. Have you found out, Harry, why it is called Shrove-Tuesday?"

"Yes, Phil, I found all about it, in a book of the Fasts and Festivals, which I got as a reward at Christmas. It is called Shrove-Tuesday, because in old times the people used to go and 'shrive,' or confess themselves to the Priest."

"Quite right," said Dilwyn, "and no doubt the tolling of the bell on this day, was originally intended for the purpose of calling the people to confession, and not, as is supposed now-a-days, to remind them to prepare their dinners."

"I am sure I am glad we have not to do

that now," said Charley Salt; I should be in a great fright if I had to go and tell Mr. Warlingham all the things I had done wrong: he would think so ill of me, and be so very angry with me."

"Perhaps so," answered Philip Dilwyn, "but surely it is less fearful to confess one's sins to man, than to God. God is all holiness, and purity, but even the best of our fellow-creatures are sinners, like ourselves."

"But I should feel so ashamed of telling all my bad thoughts to a fellow-creature," observed Charley.

"You mean that it would go against your pride to do so. The fact is, Charley, when we confess our sins to God, we do not realize to ourselves what and how numerous our sins have been. We do not go over them one by one, enumerating all the little circumstances which increased our guilt. This we shrink from doing: and we slur them over in the general confession, that we are sinners. Now if we had to confess our sins to a fellow-creature, that person, if he were a good man, would put searching questions, and try and

lay bare our self-deceits, and shew us the real character of our offences in God's sight. He would help us to do properly, that work of self-examination which is so needful for us, but so painful to us, and the knowledge that at stated times we must lay open our hearts to him, would, I have no doubt, oftentimes render us more careful and more anxious to escape from our besetting sins."

"Then you think, Phil, that it would be a good thing if we were to come and tell one another our faults?"

"I think on the subject," answered Dilwyn, "as my Bible teaches me to think. The Holy Apostle, S. James, (Chap. v, 16), enjoins us in so many words to confess our sins, one to another."

"But, Philip," asked Harry Martin, "if confession of sins to our fellow creatures, or to the priest, be such a good thing, why do we not all practise it?"

"There is nothing to hinder you from doing so. On the contrary, if the Bible be true, it is a sin to neglect it."

"But why does not the Church encourage it?"

"She *does* encourage it Harry. If you look at the office for the Visitation of the Sick, in your Prayer-book, you will find that the Priest is directed 'to move the sick person to make a special confession of his sins.'"

"But why has the custom fallen into disuse among us Philip?"

"First, because it is one which is so repugnant to the pride of our fallen nature, that men would be sure to escape from it, whenever they could find an excuse for doing so; and secondly, because such an excuse was unhappily found in the abuses which became connected with confession, while our Church yet held communion with Rome."

"Oh, yes," said Henry, "I have often heard about that. The Priest was supposed to have the power of forgiving sins, and absolution was often bought for money."

"I fear that, practically at least, it often was so," replied Philip.

"I wish you would explain this to me,

Phil," said Charley Salt, "for I don't understand it. I know that nobody can forgive sins but God, and yet, whenever we go to church, we hear that God has 'given power and commandment to His ministers to declare and pronounce to His people, being penitent, the absolution and remission of their sins.' How is this?"

"I see no difficulty, or even apparent contradiction in it." said Dilwyn. "The priest does not speak to us in his own name, but God's. To the truly penitent, God's forgiveness is conveyed, through the priest's absolving words, just as through the priest's hands, the Body and Blood of Christ are delived to the faithful in the Lord's Supper. He who comes to the Holy Communion in a state of wilful sin, receives no benefit from it; and he who listens to the words of absolution with an impenitent mind, remains unforgiven, for repentance is a main condition of absolution. But in neither case does the blessing emanate from the priest, but from God, Whose servant he is, and in Whose place he stands. The strongest form of absolution used by our Church, is

that in the Visitation of the Sick. Here the priest, after hearing the sick man's confession, is empowered, if the patient humbly and heartily desire it, to absolve him after this sort,—'Our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath left power to His Church to absolve all sinners, who truly repent, and believe in Him, of His great mercy, forgive thee thine offences: and by His authority committed to me I absolve thee from all thy sins, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.' See what care is taken to make it clear that *in himself* the priest has no power to forgive sins. It is 'our Lord Jesus Christ'.... 'forgive thee.' Then it is by 'His authority'.... 'I absolve thee,' and not by the priest's own. And lastly, the absolution is pronounced by the priest, not in his own name, but in that 'of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.'"

"Thank you, Philip," said Harry Martin, "I think we can understand this, but I want to know how we can be sure that the priest has authority from Christ to pronounce this absolution."

"I will explain it to you," replied Dilwyn. "The Clergy of the Church of England hold their authority in direct succession from the Apostles, and therefore they have the same authority as the Apostles themselves in all things pertaining to the ministry. And we know from Holy Scripture, that this authority to declare God's forgiveness to those who sincerely repent was given by our Lord to His Apostles. Do you remember the text?"

Harry Martin reflected for a moment, and then said, "Yes, we read in the Gospel of S. John, (xx. 21, 23) that after the resurrection, Jesus appeared to His disciples, and said unto them, 'Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so I send you. And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.'"

"Quite right, Harry. And we also read in this same Gospel, S. John, (xvii. 22) our Lord's own declaration, that He had given to His Apostles the glory which the Almighty

Father had given Him; and S. Paul, (2 Cor. v. 18, 20) gives us an intimation as to what the nature of that glory was, when he says that to the Apostles was given 'the ministry of reconciliation,' and that they were 'ambassadors for Christ.'"

"I suppose then," said Harry, "that the priest has the same authority to absolve, as to bless."

"Exactly," replied his teacher. "In both cases he acts in his Master's name; and in both cases the benefit of his ministrations depends upon the condition of the person who receives them. If a man be worthy to receive the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, that peace will be conveyed to him, through the priest's benediction (Mat. x. 12, 13), but if he be not worthy, the peace will 'return,' whence it came. And so with the absolution; if he, on whom it is pronounced, be a true penitent, he may take comfort in the full belief that God has ratified what the priest has spoken; but if he has obtained it while his heart is not right with God, it will only serve to increase his condemnation."

"I have now got another question to ask you, Philip," said Harry Martin, after a short pause. "I was reading this afternoon about Ash-Wednesday, in that book I was mentioning just now; and I found it said that the Church had power to absolve people from 'Ecclesiastical censures;' what does that mean?"

"I will explain to you directly. But first tell us why the first day of Lent is called *Ash*-Wednesday. I suppose your book has helped you to that, Harry?"

"Yes," replied Martin. "It was so called from an ancient ceremony observed on that day. Those offenders on whom the Church had imposed penance, were on this day presented at the doors of the church. When admitted, they were arrayed in sackcloth by the priests, *ashes were thrown on their heads*, and, like Adam, when cast forth from Paradise (which was a type of the Church), they were addressed in these words, 'Remember, O man, that thou art dust, and that unto dust shalt thou return.' After the penitents had been sprinkled with ashes, they were led forth, one by one, out of the church, into which

they were not admitted again, till they had received absolution."

"That is to say," said Philip, "'the Ecclesiastical censures,' or the Church's sentence of punishment was then removed. You have now answered your own question, Harry."

"But who were the kind of persons on whom the Church inflicted such an awful punishment as that of forbidding them to enter God's House?"

"Those who were guilty of the sins, for which in the Commination service we affirm the curse of God to be due."

"And were they soon re-admitted into communion with the Church again?" asked Harry Martin.

"Of course that depended, in a great measure, on the degree of their guilt. But many a sin which is thought little of now-a-days, would, in primitive times, have been treated with such strictness and severity, that the offender would be kept under public penance all his life. The *ordinary* course of penance often held men for ten, fifteen, or twenty years in going through the several stages of

repentance: but for some more heinous crimes, no certain term of years was limited but their lives; and perfect reconciliation and absolution was only granted them at their last hour; and some (those who had been guilty of idolatry, adultery, or murder) not even then."

"You mention the stages of repentance, Philip, what were they?"

"Those whom, on their earnest sorrow, the Church allowed to do penance for their sins against their brethren and against God, she divided into four classes. In the first stage of their penance, they were called mourners; their station was in the church-porch, where they lay with their faces to the ground, begging the prayers of the faithful as they went in, and desiring to be admitted to do public penance in the church.—By and bye, this proof of their sorrow was accepted, and they were allowed to enter into the church to listen to the sermon, and reading of the Scriptures; but they stood apart from the rest of the congregation, and were not permitted to join with them in prayer.—The next step was that they

were allowed to kneel with their fellow-worshippers, and join in certain prayers especially made for them. The sincerity of their sorrow being thus far shewn, they were allowed, after the other penitents had been dismissed, to stand with the Faithful at the altar, and join in the common prayers, but as yet they were not permitted to receive the Holy Communion.—At length they were reconciled to the Church, and permitted to receive this blessed Sacrament with their brethren."

"Oh, Philip," exclaimed the eldest boy, "how different was all this from our ways of going on!"

"Different indeed!" replied Philip, "and it may well raise a doubt in our hearts, as to how far our way of going on can be a right way, if it is so utterly unlike all that prevailed throughout the whole Christian world, in the earliest, and therefore the purest times."

"But, Philip, if this severity on the part of their Church was useful, and for the benefit of those who had wilfully broken their Baptismal vows, why is it not exercised by our own Church of England?"

"I know but one answer to your question, Harry. We are grown so evil-minded, and are sunk so deep in sin, that the Church despairs of being obeyed in anything she enjoins. If her children will not obey her in little things (and this we know to be the case), it is vain to hope that she will be obeyed in great ones."

"But if she never tells us that this ancient discipline was good, how can we know that she approves it? asked Harry Martin."

"Nay, Harry, do not speak without consideration. Reflect a moment, and then say whether it be indeed true that she has *not* expressed her opinion on this point. Here, take this Prayer-book, and look at the Commination service."

"Oh to be sure!" said Harry, "I am quite ashamed of my own thoughtlessness. The very commencement of the service contains the Church's witness on the subject. 'Brethren, in the Primitive Church there was a *godly* discipline, that, at the beginning of Lent, such persons as stood convicted of notorious sin were put to open penance, and punished in this world, that their souls might

be saved in the day of the Lord; and that others, admonished by their example, might be the more afraid to offend. Instead whereof, *(until the said discipline may be restored again, which is much to be wished)* it is thought good, that at this time (in the presence of you all) should be read the general sentence of God's cursing against impenitent sinners.... to the intent that, being admonished of the great indignation of God against sinners, ye may be the rather moved to earnest and true repentance.'"

"There," said Philip Dilwyn, when Martin had finished reading, "you can no longer doubt that the *wish* of our Church is to give her children the same privileges, to exert over them the same strict yet merciful authority which she exercised in old times."

"No," replied Harry, "and all you have now taught me will give me a different kind of feeling about the Commination service. Hitherto, I have heard it read with a feeling of awe, owing to what I have heard people say about 'cursing their neighbours' whenever they join in it, but now I trust it will teach

me to think more of the exceeding heinousness of sin (especially of my own), and of the danger there is, lest, having lost the Church's discipline, (which would have kept it always before us) we should cease to feel the *real magnitude* of our offences."

"I think," observed Philip Dilwyn, "you could hardly have read over that service attentively, or you could not have thought it an uncharitable service, which anybody must do who supposes that he runs the risk of cursing his neighbours by joining in it."

"Then you do not think it uncharitable, Philip, to add 'Amen,' when the priest says that drunkards, for instance, are accursed. Does it not look like a pronouncing a curse on some of the persons whom we know in our own minds to be given to drink?"

"I will answer your question by putting one to Charley who has been so long and patiently listening. I suppose, Charley, it would throw your mother into a great fright, would it not, if you were to run into her bedroom some night, and wake her, and tell her that your house was on fire?"

"That I am sure it would," replied Charley.

"But would it be right to leave her to be burnt in her bed, through fear of causing her an alarm?"

"Nobody could think that, Philip."

"And now, which would be the kindest by a drunkard—to let him go on in a state of careless security, till his drink brought him to that place where the fire is never quenched; or to warn him of his danger before it is too late, and alarm him very much by shewing him his real condition, and so give an opportunity of escape, while escape is yet possible?"

"There can be no question at all about the matter," replied Charley.

"Well," replied Dilwyn, "that is just the view of the case which is taken in the Commination Service. There are certain sins into which we are all liable to fall, which sins, if committed, render us liable to God's wrath and damnation. Now the Church, on a very solemn occasion, recounts the chief of these sins, in order that we may all bear in mind that the curse of God is indeed due to them. She warns us in mercy and kindness of the

peril in which we are placed, and she requires of us to acknowledge with our own lips that we are exposed to such danger. And they who find fault with her for so doing, must, if they follow out their own reasoning consistently, give up reading their Bibles, for they cannot do so without condemning those who are guilty of wilful sin."

"Yes," answered Harry, "but it is one thing to hear God's threatenings, and another to make a prayer that they may come to pass."

"We make no such prayer in the Commination Service," replied Philip Dilwyn.

"Indeed?" said Harry Martin. "Then why do the people say 'Amen,' when the priest reads the sentences of God's cursing?"

"Because, in the first place, God Himself (Deut. xxvii.) commanded these Amens to be said after these curses: and therefore good there must be in saying them, and harm there can be none, if men, when they say them, understand them. But I see your difficulty, and can remove it. What do you mean by the word 'Amen?'"

"So be it, or So let it be," replied Charley Salt, glad to shew that he was attending to what was going on.

"Yes, that is generally the meaning of the word, *but not always.* When at the end of prayers, for instance, we use it, it *has* that meaning. At the end of the Creed it *has not.* At the end of a prayer, it implies a wish that that prayer may be granted. At the end of the Creed, or of those curses in the Commination Service, it is only an assent to the truth of what is there said. Amen is a Greek word which means verily, or in truth. Thus, when our blessed Lord desired to assure his disciples very strongly of the truth of anything, He was wont to say, 'Verily, verily I tell you so and so.' Now, the words which we translate 'verily, verily,' are in the Greek, 'Amen, Amen.' You need not, therefore, fear when you say Amen in the Commination Service that you are either cursing yourself or your neighbours. You are not wishing that the curse may fall, but acknowledging and affirming that the curse of God is indeed due to them. So that Amen is no more in this place

than a declaration, that he whom God blesseth is blessed, and he whom God curseth is cursed: and if we believe this with our hearts, when we say it with our lips, it will shew us our danger, and bring us to repentance."*

"I am very much obliged to you, Philip, for this explanation. I quite understand now, that Amen has two meanings. If I had thought about its use at the end of the Creed I must have made this out for myself, but I did not. However, I shall remember it now, and will point it out to anybody whom I see falling into my own error. And now, as we are speaking of this service, I should like to ask you one other question. Does it not make you very uncomfortable to use the last prayer in it?"

"What part of it, Harry?" asked his friend.

"That part in which we say, 'Be favourable, O Lord, be favourable to Thy people, who turn to Thee in weeping, fasting, and praying.'—Praying, we certainly are, but it sounds such terrible hypocrisy to speak of ourselves as weeping and fasting, when nobody is

* See Dean Comber and Bishop Sparrow in loc.

weeping, and hardly anybody, perhaps, fasting."

"The Prayer-book speaks of us as we ought to be; and if we are not as we ought to be, that is a great reason for making a change in ourselves, but none for wishing that the prayer was different."

"But hardly anybody now-a-days does weep or fast, do they?" asked Charley Salt.

"Many more, I trust, Charley, than are known to do so," answered Philip, "and I trust their numbers are continually on the increase."

"But why need we fast in Lent?" asked Charley. "It is not ordered in the Bible, is it?"

"It is ordered by the Church; and the Bible enjoins us to hear and obey the Church in all those things in which her commands are in accordance with those of God."

"But are we not directly enjoined to fast, Philip?" said Harry Martin.

"It is rather one of those many duties which are rather implied, and taken for granted, than enjoined in so many words.

We know that on certain occasions, it was strictly commanded under the law: it was a practice adopted by the Prophets and other holy men, and by our Lord Himself, and His Apostles, and by the Church Catholic from our Lord's time to the present. Our Lord spoke of it as a thing to be guarded from abuse, and therefore as a thing to be used. And He distinctly stated it to be a practice which would be conducive to the welfare of His Church, when He Himself should be removed from it, The times and the manner of it He left to be decided by those whose office in His Church it was to take care that all things should be done decently and in order."

"And has this fast of Lent, been long used in the Church?" inquired Harry.

"It has," replied Philip, "a fast has been observed in Spring, (you know that the word Lent, means Spring), for above a thousand years. We know not by whom it was first instituted, and we believe that it varied in its duration at different times, but, for the very long period which I have named, there has

always been a time set apart for humiliation and mortifying of the flesh, as a fit preparation for celebrating the yearly return of our Blessed Lord's Passion and Death. At first, I believe, the fast was one of forty hours, (that being the space during which it was supposed that our Lord's body lay in the grave); but, as I have already said, for the last thousand years, Lent has been considered to be a fast of forty days."

"Why do you suppose that the number forty, was chosen?" said Harry.

"In commemoration of our Saviour's fast in the wilderness; and perhaps, likewise with reference to the fasts of Moses and Elijah, which lasted for the same time."

"But what was the use of appointing a fast of so great a length that nobody could keep it? I am sure anybody must die, who tried to go without food for forty days,—I mean anybody now-a-days. I never heard of any person hereabouts making the attempt but one, and he died of it."

"And who was that, Harry?" asked Philip, with a look of surprise.

"Oh, don't you know? the old Bishop in the Cathedral. Mr. Tomkins, the verger, told us all about it. There lies the Bishop in his robes, with a staff in his hand, and a ring on his finger, at full length, on the top of the tomb, such as he used to appear in the church on Festival days: and down below on a level with the floor, is another representation of him, with nothing on but a sackcloth, as Mr. Tomkins said, and his body reduced to a complete skeleton; the bones are quite starting through the skin. Mr. Tomkins said that he fasted till nearly the end of Lent, but died just before Passion Week. No doubt that Bishop was a very good man, but I don't think he had any business to starve himself to death."

"Well, Harry, I can set your mind at ease about the good Bishop. Mr. Tomkins told me (as indeed he tells everybody else) the same story. And so I determined to ask Mr. Warlingham about it. He smiled when he heard it, and said that there were many of the Cathedrals in which the vergers tell a similar tale. He assured me that the whole thing

was a falsehood from beginning to end; for that the skeleton below was not intended to represent a body emaciated by fasting, but one which was lying in the grave. And he told me that such tombs were often erected in old times by persons during their life time, as a sort of lesson to themselves in the midst of their earthly grandeur to remember that they were dust, and that to dust they should return. And some time afterwards Mr. Warlingham met me in the Cathedral, and taking me up to the monument, explained to me the meaning of the inscription which was in Latin, and written in very old characters, and which mentioned that he died in August. And I think even Mr. Tomkins would have a difficulty in proving that Lent ever fell in that month."

"But didn't you tell Mr. Tomkins of his error?" inquired Martin.

"Oh yes," said Phil Dil, "but I got no thanks, I can assure you. Mr. Tomkins observed that he wasn't going to have his bread taken out of his mouth by any such nonsense. It was a tale that the holy-day folks were very

fond of hearing, and it brought many an odd six-pence into his pocket, and that if it wasn't a true story, it ought to be, and at any rate the last verger told it, and so he should, as long as he had anything to do with the Cathedral."

"Well said, Tomkins!" exclaimed Harry, laughing. "I shall take care how I swallow his tales again."

"He acts very wrongly," replied Philip, "in thus continuing to assert what he knows is untrue: but I now wish you to consider something which does not appear to have occurred to you, and which, even before you knew what I have just told you, might have satisfied you that there was an error in what Mr. Tomkins asserted. Suppose that the good Bishop had kept his Lenten fast of forty days, as strictly as possible, would he have gone without food from Ash Wednesday till Easter Day?"

Harry Martin reflected for a moment or two, and then he said, "Oh no, of course not. The Sundays are not fast days."

"You are quite right," replied Philip,

"even supposing him to have gone altogether without food on the week days, still he would have eaten on the Sundays. But the fact is, the Church never required anything so absurd and impossible of her children, as that they should go without food from week's end to week's end. In the strictest fast she ever contemplated, she always allowed one meal in the course of the day."

"But does the Church of England require of *us*, Philip, that we should only eat one meal à day during the whole of Lent?" said Harry.

"The Church of England, Harry, lays down no rules whatever as to the *manner* in which we should fast. She leaves that to the conscience of each individual. Some of us are weakly, and some are strong: some can go a long while without food, and others cannot; and therefore, as I say, she lays down no particular rules lest they should become a snare to people, as such rules have often been in times past."

"But what good can come of fasting?"

"No good whatever unless it be rightly

used, Harry. In itself it is a matter of no consequence, whether we eat, or abstain from eating. If we abstain from eating in order that we may gain credit from those who know us to be fasting, we are no better than hypocrites. If, again, we fast in private, and persuade ourselves that there is any merit in doing so, and that it is a good work which deserves a reward at God's hand, we may be sure that we offend Him, instead of pleasing Him. But if we fast, by way of punishment for our sins, and for the purpose of gaining a mastery over our appetites, and making self-denial a habit to us, then we may hope that fasting may be of real service to us, as a means towards an end;—the end being the subjection of our own will in all things to God's."

"There are a great many fast-days in the year," said Harry hesitatingly.

"There are," replied Philip, "the forty days of Lent; every Friday in the year (unless Christmas Day fall on a Friday); the Ember days; the Rogation days; and the Eves or Vigils of many of the Saints' days. So that altogether about a quarter of each

year is set apart by the Church for seasons of repentance and humiliation. If she had set apart three quarters instead of one quarter, it would not have been more than our sins had made necessary. But she wisely takes into consideration the extent of human infirmity. She knoweth whereof we are made, she remembereth that we are but dust; and so requires of us no more than she thinks us able to perform. And even here she is so careful of making us despair, or of casting us down through over-much sorrow, that she ever contrives to mingle her fasts and festivals together, so that the Christian pilgrim, like the weary traveller who finds an Inn, from time to time, in the course of his journey, may occasionally refresh himself, and so go on again more cheerfully."

"Philip," said Harry Martin, very gravely, "I fear I have done very wrong about fasting. I have quite neglected it. Mother gives us flour dumplings, or may be potatoes and red herrings on Ash Wednesday, and Good Friday, because she always says that we shouldn't eat meat on fast-days, and that is all

my fasting. But you know, Philip, it often happens that we have not meat for dinner, for father can't afford it; and so we can't be guided by the same rules as if we were rich."

"And you may be sure, Harry, that under such circumstances God will not judge you as if you were rich. It never was expected that those who have but little to eat at any time, nor those who have to work hard all day to earn that little, nor those who are aged and sickly, nor young children like yourself, who are growing rapidly, and need all the support you can get, should fast. Under such circumstances it would not be *right*, but very *wrong* to fast. There are other ways in which the same object may be gained."

"What are they?" said Martin.

"If you will turn to the sixth and seventh verses of the 58th chapter of Isaiah, you will see. You will there learn that anything which involves self-denial, and the sacrifice of your own comforts, may be made to answer the same purpose as abstaining from meat and drink. The same thought has been put into verse by a poet of our own country.* I will

* Herrick's Noble Numbers, p. 65.

repeat the lines in which he teaches how 'To keep a true Lent.'

"Is this a Fast, to keep
The larder lean
And clean
From fat of calves and sheep?

Is it to quit the dish
Of flesh, yet still
To fill
The platter high with fish?

Is it to fast an hour,
Or ragged to go,
Or show
A down-cast look and sour?

No: 'tis a Fast to dole
Thy sheaf of wheat,
And meat,
Unto the hungry soul.

It is to fast from strife,
From old debate,
And hate;
And circumcise thy life.

To shew a heart grief-rent,
To starve thy sin,
Not bin;
And that's to keep thy Lent."

"You see, Harry," continued Philip Dilwyn, "that there are other ways of fasting, besides going without food."

"Yes," replied Martin, "but they seem to be chiefly alms-deeds and acts of charity. Now I have no money to give away; I have rarely a six-pence I can call my own."

"But you can do acts of kindness. If, for example, when you would rather go and play at football, you take your book, and read for an hour or two to poor blind Sally Nokes, do you not shew both self-denial, and Christian charity? This is but one instance; but hardly a day will go over your head without suggesting several others. Whatever gives you the opportunity of doing something which you had rather not do, affords you the opportunity of learning self-denial. And to acquire the habit of self-denial is, as I have already said, the great end of fasting. Self-denial will, under grace, enable you to mortify and kill all your vices and besetting sins; and when they are mastered, your work in this world is done."

"Then you think, there is no reason why I should fast at present?" asked Harry Martin.

"I do not think that a growing boy like you, ought to take less food than is necessary: but then, on the other hand, I don't think you ought to take more than is necessary. And I should think it wrong of you to pamper your appetite (supposing you to have the opportunity of doing so), by trying to get nice things, or things of which you happen to be particularly fond. If you were a rich man's child, instead of a poor lad, you would have opportunities of exercising this kind of self-denial more easily than you can at present, but even *you* may make some little difference, I think, between a fast day and a festival."

"I can eat my bread without butter on it," said Charley Salt.

"Yes, Charley, you can do so: and if you do it from a right motive, the act will, I doubt not, be as pleasing to God, as if for conscience sake you abstained from a hearty dinner of beef and pudding."

"After all, however," said Harry Martin, "there are, I suppose, things of more consequence than fasting, to be attended to on a *fast day*?"

"Of course there are;" replied Philip, "for as I have already remarked to you, fasting is but a means to an end. We fast, as it is said in the Collect for the first Sunday in Lent, in order that 'our flesh being subdued to the spirit,' we may obey Christ 'in righteousness and true holiness.' And S. Paul teaches us the same thing when he says, 'I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection, lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a cast-away.' We fast, in order that we may gain the mastery over our bodily appetites, and so may be less selfish, more thoughtful about others, less eager about the things of this world, better disposed to prayer, and self-examination, and more inclined to see sin of all kind in its true colours, its exceeding sinfulness, and its hatefulness in God's sight; but if, while we are fasting, we neglect all or any of these things, our abstinence will be of no use to us, and our labour will be in vain, since we have not laboured 'in the Lord,' nor are we abounding in His work."

"I trust," said Harry, "now that I think

that I understand my duty better, I shall do it more diligently. And now, before we go home, I wish you would tell us how we can most profitably keep this present Lent. It will be a kind of sample of what we ought to do at other times of fasting."

"I will do so," replied Philip Dilwyn; "but before I do it, let me give you this piece of advice:—Do not attempt too much at first. You are desiring to live as the Church would have you live, and I encourage you most heartily to do so; but you must remember that many things will seem hard and strange to you; and if you attempt what is beyond your strength, you will soon grow weary, and then you will give up your efforts to do right, and so, perhaps, fall back into a worse condition than you were before; whereas, if you will go on gradually, watching yourselves more and more carefully, and denying yourselves more strictly as time goes on, you will, in the end, through God's assistance, be able to accomplish much which, at the out-set, would have been impossible. Religious habits are like all other habits, only to be gained by de-

grees. We cannot arrive at once at the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ, any more than we can start out of infancy into manhood. We must be content to learn our trade, to practise ourselves in it, to put up with failures and disappointments, and so become masters of it through patience, and pains-taking diligence. We must '*grow* in grace;' we must '*go on* unto perfection;' we must 'advance from strength to strength,' 'adding,' as S. Peter says, 'to your faith virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity.' It is by this gradual progress alone that we can ever hope, in our poor measure, to gain that path in which our blessed Lord bid us walk, when He commanded us to be perfect, even as our Father which in heaven is perfect.

"And now to answer the question you have proposed to me. We enter upon the forty days of Lent to-morrow; let us, therefore, briefly consider the subjects to which the

Church would direct our minds at this season, for so shall we be better able to carry out her intentions in our own persons. To-morrow, then, you will hear a special service, denouncing God's anger and judgments against impenitent sinners, and which puts words into *our* mouths as though we were turning to our offended Maker in weeping, fasting, and praying. And if, when to-morrow's service is over, you look at the Collects, Epistles, and Gospels for the six following Sundays, you will find them all framed or selected as for a season devoted to penitence and prayer. First, on Ash Wednesday, you are taught the danger of fasting as the hypocrites, and the manner in which you may render it an acceptable service. Next, you have the example of our blessed Lord and His Apostles set before you, to shew you how they exercised themselves in this respect.* You are warned against the seductions of the flesh, and the need there is of acquiring complete mastery over our affections and wills.† You pray‡ that grace may

* Epistle and Gospel, first Sunday in Lent.
† Epistle for the 2nd and 3rd Sundays.
‡ Collects for the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Sundays.

be given you to use such abstinence, that the flesh being subdued to the Spirit, you may obey the Lord's godly motives in righteousness and true holiness; you pray against evil thoughts, evil spirits, and the punishment due to evil deeds: in a word, the Church services adopt a tone at this season, wholly irreconcileable with anything but a time of special humiliation and contrition for sin.

"Such being the case, try and make Lent what the Church seems to wish it to be to each of us. If you can fast, do so: but at any rate give a much larger portion of your time than usual to thoughts about the state of your soul, and to searching inquiry into your condition in God's sight. See what are your besetting sins; see where you have got into careless habits, and humble yourselves before God acordingly: not once, or twice, but *daily*. Be diligent in prayer. If you have any spare money, give it away in acts of charity. Be very careful to attend all the Church services at this season. Read your Bible, and especially those parts which shew God's hatred of sin, and His judments on sinners, at what-

ever times you can find or *make* leisure. See how you can shew kindness to those who are in trouble, need, sickness, or any other adversity. And wherever you have the opportunity of denying yourselves, even in lawful things, do so: for remember the words of our Lord, how He said, 'If any man will come after Me, *let him deny himself, and take up his cross* DAILY, and follow Me.'

"These things if you do, you will spend Lent well, and will find a calmness and comfort even in this season of humiliation and penitence, which will be the best possible preparation for your Easter joy."

THE

APRIL FOOL.

"Wrong to make any body an April fool! Wrong! I never heard such nonsense in my life, such cant!" exclaimed Frederick Sutton in a tone of high contempt.

"I did not say it was wrong. I only said that I wasn't sure that it was right, that it was harmless; and therefore that it was *safest*, not to do it," answered Harry Martin.

"Ah! I know why *you* don't like the custom; you are afraid of being made an April fool yourself; you don't like being laughed at."

"That depends, Fred, upon circumstances, —who the person may be that laughs at me. There are those whose ridicule would pain me very much, because I love and respect them: but there are others who might laugh at me all day long, if they pleased, and not a straw should I care."

"Yes, so you say; but it is quite evident you don't like being laughed at, else you would not be ready to find objections to our making April fools of one another. You know you would be sure to fall into the trap, and be caught. I dare say I made you an April fool half-a-dozen times last year."

"Ah," replied Harry, good humouredly, "but I am a year older, and I suppose *wiser* than I was then: besides, if I remember right, you played off your tricks upon me after noon was passed; and then they say that the fool is the deceiver, not the deceived."

"Yes, the *deceived* themselves say so, no doubt; *they* are glad of any excuse. Drowning men catch at straws."

"Well, Fred, I know it is no use arguing *with* you. You can hold your opinion, and I

can hold mine. You can make an April fool of me if you like, and yet be sure that there is no danger of my returning the compliment. There's some comfort for you in *that*," added Harry slyly.

"Oh, but that will not satisfy me," replied Fred, "I want to bring you over to my opinion, or else I shan't have half the pleasure I should otherwise have in making a fool of you. There is no fun in having matters all one's own way. It would be like shooting at a hare sitting, or taking any other unfair advantage of a defenceless creature, if I were to attack you without a chance of retaliation. Come, I know it's all obstinacy. You had much better be like other people, and take things as you find them. There is no use in being singular."

"There you are wrong, Fred. It is much better to be singular than to follow a multitude to do evil. The Bible tells us that. However, I am not singular, as you shall see. Here comes Philip Dilwyn. I say, Phil, is there any harm in making April fools?"

"Why indeed, Harry, I cannot see any great amount of good in it,"

"Oh, that is no answer to the question," replied Fred Sutton, "Is there any *harm* in the custom, that is what I want to know? Yes or no?"

"Well then I should say that there *is* harm," answered Philip.

"Why?" asked Sutton, his manner shewing his disappointment.

"In the first place, there is, generally speaking, some deceit employed. A person is sent to look for something which is not in the place to which he is directed; or he is frightened or affected by the narrative of some event, which has never happened. I do not think that we are justified in telling lies under any circumstances."

"Oh, Phil, but you cannot call these things *lies*."

"What are they then?" asked Dilwyn, bluntly. "They are not *truths*, else the person who believes them would not be an 'April fool.'"

"Come, you cannot contradict that, Fred," said Martin triumphantly.

"Do you mean to say that there is no dif-

ference between a lie told to hide a fault, or to gain an end, and one which is spoken in jest, with no worse purpose than that of raising a laugh?" asked Fred.

"There may be a difference in the degrees of criminality, and yet both may be criminal," replied Philip.

"But there is surely a great difference between a 'white lie,' and a 'black one,'" observed Fred.

"Not so much, Fred, as you seem to think. I never knew a person who was indifferent to telling what are called 'white lies,' but was quite ready to tell a 'black' one whenever it served his purpose. And my belief is, that the lies which are called white ones, are in reality very 'black;' very hateful and offensive to God."

"It always seems to me," observed Harry, "that we have no business to draw distinctions between 'fibs' and 'lies,' — between 'black lies' and 'white' ones."

"You are quite right Harry," said Phil Dil: "we ought not to allow our sense of right and wrong to be blinded by these imagi-

nary distinctions. It is, no doubt, very convenient to the world to divide falsehoods into two classes, and to tolerate the class which accords with its own habits. But we, who are Christians, ought to bear in mind that when we come to be judged hereafter, it will not be by the world, nor by the world's law, and that the result of that judgment will be a sentence of eternal condemnation against every man that 'loveth and maketh a lie.' "

Frederick Sutton was by no means disposed to admit the force of what Philip Dilwyn had just said, for he had been very ill brought up by a foolish and worldly-minded mother, who had no scruple whatever in telling what *she* called 'white lies,' and Frederick's own notions of veracity were not as strict as they ought to have been: but he could not controvert what Philip had laid down, so he tried to get out of the difficulty another way. "After all," said he, "it does not follow that I should have told what is not true on every occasion in which I make a person an April fool. If I send a letter directed to you by the post, and when you

open it, you find nothing inside but 'Oh, you April fool,' I have told you no lie."

"You have tried," replied Philip, "to deceive me into the belief that a sham letter was a real one; and so far there was falsehood. But granting, that with a little ingenuity you may so contrive matters as to make persons lay traps for their own credulity, and so be *self*-deceived, still it appears to me that objections may be made to the custom on other grounds."

"Indeed?" said Harry Martin in a tone of surprise, "what are they? I had not thought of them."

"Why, in the first place, many persons are exceedingly provoked at being made April fools; their vanity is wounded; they grow angry at being laughed at, and give way to a temper which is sinful. It is very foolish to do so, but they do it. Hence we *may* be guilty of two faults ourselves. We may have pained a fellow-creature unnecessarily, which is not doing as we would be done by, and we may have given him occasion to fall into sin, and that can never be a slight offence. But besides this, when the Lord Himself has de-

clared that whosoever shall say to his brother, Thou Fool, 'shall be in danger of hell fire,' I really do not know that we can be too cautious, in avoiding any course which may *tend* to the committing of the sin so awfully denounced. True, in the one case, the expression is used good-humouredly, and in the other malignantly: but still the merest possible risk of doing what is so positively forbidden, is much better avoided. And though this would seem a very far-fetched objection to most people, still it is one that I feel, and therefore I will honestly make you acquainted with it. I have also one more objection; but into that still fewer persons at the present day will enter."

"What is it Phil?" inquired Harry.

"I believe the custom of making April fools, arose out of an allusion to events which the Church records about this time. The ignorance of a rude age, must be, in this case, the excuse for a profaneness, which is now happily forgotten. But I would take the custom as I find it, and viewing it simply as a source of amusement and laughter among

friends, I would say that the less we have to do with laughter and amusement during the penitential season of Lent (and in this season, the first of April generally falls), the better."*

"I can't conceive what makes folks think so much more about Lent now-a-days, than they used to do. Mother says she considers

* The late Mr. Douce, a high authority on all subjects connected with ancient customs and national antiquities, has expressed an opinion that the making of April fools was borrowed by us from the French. "The French," says Brand, in his Popular Antiquities, "have their All Fool's Day, and call the person imposed upon an April Fish; "*Poisson* d'Avril,' whom we term an April Fool." And he goes on to quote the explanation of a French writer on the subject. The word "Poisson," he affirms, was corrupted through the ignorance of the people, from "*Passion*;" and "length of time," he continues, "has almost totally defaced the original intention, which was as follows: that as the *Passion* of our Blessed Saviour took place about this time of year, and as the Jews sent him backwards and forwards to mock and torment Him; *i. e.*, from Annas to Caiaphas, from Caiaphas to Pilate, from Pilate to Herod, and from Herod back again to Pilate, this ridiculous, or rather impious custom, took its rise from thence, by which we send about from one place to another such persons as we think proper objects of our ridicule." —This is a most distressing explanation of the origin of the custom, but the reader, who is at all acquainted with the profaneness of the "Mysteries" of ancient times, and the fearful (though, no doubt, unintentional) irreverence with which the most holy persons and things were treated in those dramatic representations of Scripture, will not be disposed to consider the statement made above to be too revolting to sense and decency to be possible.

that it is all great nonsense, and a parcel of stuff, to cram people's heads with such new-fangled notions."

This was said by Frederick Sutton in such an irreverent, flippant manner, that Philip Dilwyn felt sorry that he had spoken as he had done before him. It is always better to be reserved, or wholly silent in the presence of persons who are disposed to cavil at holy things; to speak unreservedly will seldom do them good, and may tend to increase their sin, by giving them the opportunity of making a mock at, or opposing themselves to the Church and her ordinances. We are forbidden to give that which is holy to the dogs, or cast our pearls before swine.

"Fred," replied Philip Dilwyn, "I am sorry to hear you speak in that way, and sorrier still to hear you quote your mother, as giving utterance to such opinions. If, however, she would come to church, she would hear why she *ought* to observe Lent, and if she will look in her Prayer-book, she will find that its observance is no new-fangled novelty. As for you, Fred, you, I am sure, *have had* the obligations and duties of Lent

explained to you again and again at school; but I am sorry to see, by the very little control which you show over your words and actions, that you do not avail yourself of the opportunities it affords you of learning what you so much need, habits of self-restraint and self-denial."

Fred coloured, and was abashed for a few moments; but his pride (for the Tempter is ever close at hand) came to his help, and he endeavoured to carry off his confusion by assuming an air of indifference.

"Oh, for that matter," said he, "I don't see that I'm worse than my neighbours. I dare say what you teach us at school is very right, and all that, but people can't be monks and hermits now-a-days. At any rate *I* can't; and, besides, I'm thinking of something else now. I've heard all you've said about April fools, and I don't agree with you at all. So, Harry, you had better keep a sharp look out, for I don't intend to be baulked, I can tell you. I shall have sent you to Amworth for a pint of pigeon's milk, before noon to-morrow, I know."

"And suppose he was to bring you some pigeon's milk, Fred, who'd be the fool then?" asked Phil Dilwyn.

"Eh?" said Fred, with a look of surprise, "I suppose I should: but I guess I am pretty safe."

"Don't be too sure of that, Fred; for though you may stare, I can assure you of this, that it has lately been discovered that pigeons have milk: so that to send for some is not altogether so much of a fool's errand as you suppose."*

"You forget what day it is, Phil," answered Fred incredulously, "you should have kept that tale till to-morrow. You might have come out uncommon strong with that on the first of April. Pigeon's milk indeed! Ha, ha, ha! I hope you'll have a bowl of it for breakfast, Harry, the first thing in the morning. It will sharpen your wits amazingly."

"And away ran Fred, laughing as he went, and steadily resolving in his own mind that

* See Mr. Jesse's recent volume, "Country Life," p. 360. At the period of incubation a curdy substance, or milky secretion, may be found in the crops of pigeons, *with* which they feed their young.

Harry Martin, and if possible, Philip Dilwyn should be among his victims on the following day.

Such of my readers as are acquainted with a former volume of these tales, will remember certain circumstances which befell Frederick Sutton, on the occasion of "beating the bounds," and will have gained some insight into his character. I wish I could now say that the events of that day had made him wiser; but no, he continued just as vain and self-sufficient as ever, and his foolish mother rather encouraged than checked him in his faults; so Fred had little chance of improvement so long as he lived at home.

Some few years after the events I am now recording, Mrs. Sutton became a bankrupt; her extravagance, and her love of dress, and her visitings, and card playing, soon ran away with the profits of her shop; indeed, if I may be allowed the expression, her money was often spent before it was made, and when at length her affairs became so involved that her landlord turned her out of her house, and her goods were sold up, the creditors did not real-

ize above a few pence in the pound. Her vanity had led her into extravagance, and her extravagance had led her into dishonesty. For every body is dishonest who purchases things for which there is no reasonable probability that he will be able to pay. The result of Mrs. Sutton's misfortunes (if that deserves the name of misfortune which results from nothing but an individual's own imprudence and mismanagement), was anything but a misfortune to her family. Instead of being allowed to live on at home in idleness, they were obliged to go out to service, and work hard for their livelihood; so our friend Fred being apprenticed to a master who looked sharp after him, kept him in high order, and who (to use his own rather expressive phrase) "soon knocked the nonsense out of him," became an industrious promising lad, who, from all I can learn, is likely to get on well in the world, and (which is of much more importance), to turn out a steady worthy man.

But at the period of which I am speaking, he was a conceited little puppy, with a very good opinion of himself, and no disposition

to consider any one's judgment as better than his own; very fond of dress, and not at all indisposed to take a peep at himself in the looking-glass whenever he could find the opportunity.

The conversation which has been recorded took place in the school play-ground on the last day of March. Mr. Dilwyn was obliged to leave home on business, so school had been broken up at noon, which gave the boys a half-holyday, and the next day, being Saturday, was always a whole holyday. They had plenty of leisure time, therefore, before them, and some discussion between two or three of the older boys as to the most agreeable way of spending it, and making the most of their holyday, had led to the talk about April fools.

As Fred proceeded homeward, his mind became full of schemes for the morrow, and he was devising all sorts of ingenious plans by which he hoped to entrap his school-fellows. But Fred was not one of those people who can keep their own counsel, and therefore, as soon as he got into his mother's kitchen, he began to talk of his intentions.

"Ah, you think yourself mighty sharp, Master Fred," said his sister Caroline, "but other people are as sharp as you; and that I dare say you will discover before to-morrow is over."

"Oh, indeed, ma'am?" answered Fred ironically, "I am much obliged to you for the information. I suppose, for instance, that you think that *you* will make an April fool of me. I think I see myself being made an April fool of by you, indeed!"

"Well, at any rate, you had better not boast, Fred," observed his cousin Dick Wilson, who happened to be sitting in the room when he entered it.

"I suppose *you* intend to make a fool of me, do you? Ha, ha, ha! well that is a good notion certainly! Why, Dick, you're a regular slow coach. I must be in a poor way if I let *you* take me in."

"I'd rather be a slow coach, any day," retorted Caroline Sutton, "than give myself such airs as you do, Fred."

"Coach, Carry? no, you'll never be a coach: you'll never be anything better than a donkey-

cart. And as for giving myself airs, though I sha'nt ask *your* leave when I do so, I can tell you this, I am *not* giving myself airs. I am only saying what is truth, and what you know quite well. I *am* a great deal sharper than most boys. Ask mother if I'm not."

"Mother always sides with you."

"Well judge for yourself then. Do you try, or let Dick there try, or both of you together try and make an April fool of me to-morrow."

"Perhaps we may, and perhaps we mayn't," answered Caroline.

"At any rate I dare you to it. And what's more, I'll bet anything you please I'll make both of you April fools before I go to the steeple-chase. And I intend to be at the starting-place by ten o'clock."

"Steeple-chase!" exclaimed Dick Wilson. "Oh, is there going to be a steeple-chase after all? How I shall like to see it! Where are they start from?"

"Aha! my lad, that's a secret," answered Fred knowingly.

"Oh do tell me, Fred!" cried Dick with great eagerness.

Fred began to whistle.

"How cross you are, Fred!" exclaimed his sister. "I never saw anybody so disobliging as you are. But never mind, Dick. If he knows it, it's no secret, you may depend on that."

"Oh but it is, Carry; don't you remember how close it was kept last year when the gentlemen at Amworth had a steeple-chase? Nobody knew where they were to meet. They would not tell anybody for fear they should get warned off as trespassers. Do tell me, Fred; that's a good fellow."

"You can't keep your tongue between your teeth, Dick; you never could. And if I tell you, it will be all over the parish before night. Besides I really must not tell anybody. Very sorry, Dick, but indeed I can't."

"You might tell *me*, Fred, indeed you might. Oh, please do."

"No, Dick, I *mustn't*. I've told you so already: but if anything *does* take you *towards* Cacklequack Common in the morning, and if you *should* happen to stop under the three fir trees, why if I were you I would try and be there not much later than ten."

"Oh thank you, Fred, for telling me. That *is* being really good-natured."

"Telling you, Dick? I've told you nothing. I've never said that that *is* the starting-place."

"No, no, Fred; but we understand you," aswered Dick Wilson smiling; "a nod is as good as a wink to a blind horse. You're a sharp fellow, Fred."

"Rather," said Fred chuckling. "Yes, Dick, leave me alone for shrewdness. I believe I *am* 'cute. Mother always says she never knows which is the sharpest, Fred, or the frost, or her Whitechapel needles."

"But how did you find this out, Fred?"

"Leave me alone for finding things out. I know I'm a cunning dog," answered Frederick, in a state of great enjoyment, "but a little tricking is all fair now and then."

"You're a great rogue, Fred."

"May be I am, Dick; may be I am not: but this I will say, I should like to see anybody overreach me."

"Take care you don't overreach yourself, Fred," said his sister.

"Tut!" exclaimed Fred with a look of

great contempt, "Miss Caroline Crabstock you're no better than a donkey."

After which civil speech, he left the room, thoroughly well satisfied that he had put things in train for making all his school-fellows April fools.

Dick Wilson was a dull boy, whom nobody would suspect of a design to impose on them; and he was also a great gossip. The belief that he was in possession of a secret was, therefore, as great an excitement to him, as it would have been to any other chatterer. He could not rest till he had shewn his superior information by confiding it, with strict injunctions to silence, to everybody he met. Fred Sutton had foreseen all this, and had hit upon the scheme of making April fools of Dick and many more, by setting before them the irresistible temptation of a steeple-chase, and, at the same time, putting them on a wrong scent as to the place of meeting. In order to accomplish this, he had not, indeed, told a direct falsehood, but he had so contrived as both by word and manner to give Wilson a false impression. He certainly had

not said that the start was to be made from Cacklequack Common, but no one could doubt that he meant to imply it, and though he intended no harm by the deceit, and only aimed at carrying on what he considered to be a fair jest, still he was guilty of deceit; and though such deceits are every day practised, and the world thinks little of them, still a lie is a lie.

Unfortunately for the neighbourhood, there were some half dozen young officers stationed at this time in the barracks at Birdsley, who, having plenty of money and spare time, and very little consideration for anything but their own pleasure, had acquired a very unenviable notoriety by the mischievous pranks in which they indulged, and the very bad example they set. Lately they had introduced the fashion of steeple-chases, as they are called,—an amusement, the merit of which consists in riding in the shortest possible time, and in as straight a line as possible, to a certain number of places in succession. Of course, in order to accomplish these ends, fences must be broken down, growing crops trodden under

foot, and a great deal of damage committed not only by the racers themselves, but by the horsemen and others who endeavour to accompany them. Often, too, many frightful accidents occur, infirm persons and children will be knocked down and ridden over,—the riders themselves will be thrown and seriously injured,—and not rarely the poor horses will be ridden to death through the selfish eagerness of their owners to win the race. These are some of the more *obvious* evils of steeple-chases. Among the less obvious but much greater, is the spirit of gambling, which such exhibitions are sure to introduce among the lower orders,—who in this, as in other respects, are but too ready to ape the vices of their superiors in rank, and the idleness, rioting, and drunkenness which invariably connect themselves with them. Not a plough-boy in Yateshull but must venture his shillings on this horse or that; not a beer-house in the neighbourhood but will be crowded to know the odds upon the favourite, and have its illegal lottery.

It was still doubtful whether Captain Slash's

Rapscallion, or Major Beard's Whiskerandos were the better horse, and this all-important event was to be decided on a very appropriate day, the first of April. But so much mischief had been done to property on former occasions, and the principal landowners had been so much trespassed upon, that they had come to the resolution to warn off all intruders for the time to come.—The racers, on the other hand, to save themselves from such an inconvenience, had taken the prudent measure of keeping the day, and place of meeting, and the line of county chosen a profound secret. And the secret was kept as far as they were concerned; but one of the officer's grooms, having taken the liberty of reading one of his master's letters, was speedily enabled to enlighten his particular friends on the subject: and it was from one of these particular friends, the ostler at the Green Dragon, that Fred Sutton learned that the place of meeting was at the finger-post leading to the scene of his own misadventure, Black Slough, and the time eleven in the forenoon.

Now Fred's scheme was to send all his school-

fellows to Cacklequack Common, keep them waiting there an hour or so, then to apprize them that they were April fools, have his laugh, and then lead them to the right place, for which there would be plenty of time, as the two points were at no great distance from each other, and there was a short cut through Dingleberry wood which was interposed between them.

As soon as Fred woke in the morning, he began to think that he would have been wiser if he had not been altogether so boastful about his own superior discernment; for though he had no sort of doubt that he really was a great deal sharper than either his sister Caroline or Dick Wilson, still he could not help feeling that, if by any chance he should be taken off his guard, their triumph would be so much the greater, and his own discomfiture so much the more ludicrous. As vain people are always particularly sensitive on the subject of ridicule, it is a remarkable fact that, in nine cases out of ten, they themselves so contrive matters, as that, if a laugh *be* raised against them, it is pretty sure to be *both long* and loud.

"Certainly I have rather committed myself;" said Fred to himself, when he remembered his boastings of the previous evening, "however, I must be so much the more watchful."

He was destined to make an unlucky beginning. He was scarcely dressed, when he heard the shop-bell ring.

"Run down stairs, Fred," cried his mother, "and see who it is. I wonder what they want at this time in the morning. I'll be down as soon as I've got my gown on."

Away went Fred,—the tinkle of the bell being again repeated, and the constant habit of attending to it, making it almost a second nature to him to move briskly at its summons. On entering the shop, however, nobody was waiting on the customer's side of the counter, though the door was open. Fred went round to see if there was any one on the outside. At the same time Dick Wilson entered.

"Oh! its only you, Dick!" said Fred.

"No, its only me," replied the other.

"Well, what do you want?" inquired Fred.

"Only to remind you that to-day is the

first of April," answered Dick with a broad grin.

"Ha, ha, ha!" cried Mrs. Sutton laughing, as she entered the shop.

"Ha, ha, ha, ha!" shouted Caroline from the top of the stairs.

Fred was ready to cry with vexation, and pushing past his cousin, darted out of the shop, in spite of Dick's shouting after him, "Nay, Fred, stop a moment, I've *really* got something I want to say to you."

"You had better have stayed to hear what Dick had to say," observed Mrs. Sutton when she entered the kitchen, where Fred had seated himself in high disgust. "Are you not thinking of going to the Common by and bye, to see the start for the steeple-chase?"

Fred answered in the affirmative.

"Well, it was to speak about that, that Dick wanted to see you. He says he is sure they are *not* going to start from there to-day."

"Hang him," thought Fred to himself, "what a chattering, meddling goose he is! He has spoilt all my sport, I'll be bound!" Then out loud; "Oh indeed, Mother? What *makes him* so sure of that?"

"Why he heard the coachman at the Hall say, that when he went out to exercise this morning, he met Captain Lightbody's groom, who told him that Rapscallion fell dead lame yesterday evening."

"Oh, indeed?" observed Fred once more. "A likely story that. Master Dick is very clever no doubt, but I am not going to be made an April fool of twice in the day by him, I can tell him."

"I don't think he meant to deceive you, Fred," replied Mrs. Sutton, "I do believe it is as he says."

Clever people are sometimes rather too clever: they overreach themselves. Fred, conscious within himself of being the author of a plot to deceive others, by sending them to the Common, instead of to the Black Slough finger-post, and smarting under the vexation of having been once deceived already, suddenly became so very suspicious, that he persuaded himself that the story of Rapscallion's lameness was only plot upon plot; that Wilson and others had found out the trick he had meant to play them, and that in order to

revenge themselves, they had determined to prevent him, if possible, from seeing the sport. He, however, resolved to be even with them, and to leave any who might go to the Common to discover their mistake as they could, and himself to repair to the finger-post, which had been pointed out as the place of meeting by his trusty friend at the Green Dragon, nothing doubting that, by such a course, he would both see the sport, and keep the laugh on his own side.

"Ah! well; we shall see about that," said Fred to his mother. "I have got eyes and ears in my head as well as Dick Wilson."

Mrs. Sutton knew that there was no use in arguing with her son, and so quitted the kitchen to attend the shop, leaving Fred to make preparations for breakfast, and to consider how he should make an April fool of his sister. While thus engaged, he heard her shut the door of her sleeping room, and come along the passage: in another moment she called him from the head of the stairs. "Oh, Fred, come up here, the puppy is doing you a world of mischief! Dash! Dash! come

here, sir, and leave those things alone. Fred, he has pulled your clothes out of the drawer, and is gnawing them!"

"Oh, I dare say!,' replied Fred incredulously. "Not so easily trapped as that, Miss Carry!"

"He really *is* doing, as I say," was the reply.

"Ah well, you can take the clothes away from him, and turn him out of the room."

This was followed by a sound as if Caroline Sutton was attempting to eject the dog; but apparently without success, for in a few moments she cried, "No, I can't, he has run under the bed. You really must come up yourself."

"To be made an April fool of!" exclaimed Fred. "A likely joke indeed! Old birds, Carry, are not so easily caught."

"You'll be in a nice way, by and bye, when you *do* go up stairs, I can tell you that!" observed Caroline sharply, as she entered the room, "but remember, it is all your own fault." And down she threw herself into a chair in a pet.

"You seem to have got out of bed on the wrong side this morning."

"It's enough to provoke anybody to see a boy so obstinate as you are. I tell you the black dog will tear your clothes to tatters."

"And I tell you, sister, I don't believe the black dog is anywhere about, unless he be upon your back, as the saying is. Yes, Yes, you've got the black dog on your back; you're out of sorts. Its a bad day with you."

"No, it isn't;" said Caroline, "only you needn't be so suspicious, Fred."

"And *you* needn't have got out of bed on the wrong side, Carry."

"I don't know what you mean. I don't know what cause you have to say it will be a bad day with me!"

"If it was likely to be a good one," said Fred maliciously, "you would not have put on that stocking wrong side out."

Caroline Sutton had a pretty little foot, and being well aware of the fact, was in the habit of sitting in such a position as, according to her notions, would shew it off to the best advantage. This had become so much a habit

with her, that she often did it unconsciously. It was so on the present occasion. She was not thinking about her foot; but there it was, thrust forward for display.

The suddenness of her brother's attack, and her extreme sensitiveness as to any fault being found with her dress, threw her off her guard, and she gave a glance at her foot. It was but momentary: but her brother's object was gained, and "Ah! you April fool!" speedily resounded in her ears. Fred's triumph by no means improved his sister's temper; and the more she betrayed her vexation, the more he exerted himself to tease her, so that their morning meal was very disagreeably past, and, when it was over, the brother and sister were in a high state of ill-humour with one another.

What a miserable thing it is to see members of the same family,—those who ought to be united in kindness and affection—making their homes uncomfortable, through habits of squabbling, or fretful and teasing tempers! What a vile unchristian thing it is for any of us to find pleasure in being provoking! How wrong to go on amusing ourselves at the ex-

pense, and with the pain of others! If the greater part of the happiness of life arises out of the blessings which the ideas conveyed by that single word "Home" express, I am sure there is no misery like that of a family whose members live in a state of bickering and petty warfare. I earnestly beg my young readers to consider this, and to remember that the secret of home comfort may be found in a very short rule, "Bear and forbear."

As soon as the breakfast was over, Fred, not sorry to get out of his sister's company, and anxious, at the same time, to escape the risk of being made an April fool by any of his school-fellows,—for he was one of those people who are much less able to take, than to play off a joke,—betook himself to working in the garden till near ten o'clock, when he set off for Black Slough. He had not gone far, however, when he heard a voice calling after him. He looked round and saw Dick Wilson. He could not have fallen in with anybody whom he had less wished to see. He was inclined at first to go on, and pretend not to hear him, but Dick, he knew, was such a

good runner, that he would be sure to overtake him. So there was nothing for it but to stop. "Well, what do you want?" he called out, so soon as Dick was within speaking distance, "What's the matter now?"

"Your mother's pony is loose in the road. Somebody left the gate of the paddock open, and he has got out. You had better go and fetch him up."

"Oh, I dare say! a likely story that," exclaimed Fred in his most incredulous tone. "I haven't forgotten yet that to-day is the first of April."

"How silly!" cried Wilson impatiently, "just as if everybody were racking their brains to make an April fool of you, and just as if it mattered to anybody whether you were an April fool or not. I tell you the pony is loose, and you'd better go and look after him, unless you wish him to be lost."

"And I tell you, I'm not going to be taken in with such a lame tale as that, so I wish you good morning."

"Where are you going, Fred, in such a hurry? Not to the Common surely. I can

tell you there is no steeple-chase, so it is useless going there."

"I never said I was going to the Common, did I?"

"No, but if you take this path you can only be going to the Common, or Black Slough."

"I'll tell you what, Dick, if you will look after your affairs, I will look after mine. And, Dick, the next person you try to make a fool of, get up a more probable tale than you told me. And, Dick, if you're not particularly busy this morning, just step down the road, and catch the pony. Mother will be much obliged to you, no doubt. Ha, ha, ha! And when you've caught him, don't forget to shut the paddock gate after you! Ha, ha, ha!"

And away ran Fred, highly satisfied with having, as he supposed, turned the tables upon his cousin. Dick Wilson turned back quite vexed that he had put himself so much out of breath to so little purpose. "What a goose Fred makes of himself," thought he; "I declare I shouldn't be surprised if, before

the day is over, he should take in himself, through his excessive fear of being taken in by anybody else."

Fred, however, had no such apprehensions, and great was his glee when, on coming to the point where the path divided, he saw six or eight little boys, whom he recognized as being of the number of his younger school-fellows, making the best of their way to Cacklequack Common. He immediately turned down the path which leads to the Black Slough.

He was soon at the finger-post, and had the satisfaction of feeling that at any rate he was in good time. He had all the ground to himself.

"Ah, these gentlefolks are always after their time," said he, "I dare say it will be an hour, or an hour and a half before they are off. I wonder who there will be. I suppose all the officers from the Barracks, and the gentlemen that go out with the Foolsmoney harriers, and all the young farmers, Mr. Yoicks, and Mr. Topps, and Mr. Rasper, and everybody that has got a horse to ride. Oh! dear, dear, how I wish I had asked mother to let

me have the pony! How stupid of me not to think of that sooner! I wonder whether there is time to go back for him. But no, no; that will never do. If he's safe in the paddock, they'll all say I came home to be made an April fool of: and if, by any chance, what Dick Wilson said was true, perhaps I might be all morning trying to catch him, and so miss the race."

"And besides," reflected Fred, after a short pause, "even if I were mounted, I think I should be afraid to ride him; at least," checking himself, lest he should inflict a wound on his own vanity, "not exactly *afraid*, but I am not used to ride before so many people; and there will be such hedges, and ditches, and brooks to cross, and that horrid Black Slough, where I got in up to my neck last year; and, .. and perhaps I should have a difficulty in holding on, and if I got a tumble, I should be laughed at, and I do so hate being laughed at! No, I believe I am best as I am."

With these, and such like reflections, Fred endeavoured to kill the time, which, after he had been half-an-hour or so in solitude, be-

THE APRIL FOOL.

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gan to hang rather heavy. Still nobody made their appearance. Three or four hundred yards off there was a knoll of some height, from the summit of which there was an extensive view of the surrounding country, which was very flat in most directions.

"I may as well mount the hill, and look out," said Fred, "I shall see folks as they come, and indeed I am not sure but that the top of the hill will be the best place from which to see the race."

Accordingly, Fred was soon at the top of the knoll: but he looked in vain for any signs of an approaching crowd. Three or four turnpike roads were in sight, but they preserved their usual state of dulness. A team or two every now and then, a gig on its progress to the next market town, a couple of farmers jogging along, side by side, on their steady old nags in the dullest way imaginable, a man driving a pig, some gypsies and a donkey laden with brooms, a blue-frocked butcher's boy with a basket of meat,—these were all the passengers whom Fred, after straining his eyes in all directions, could detect in

another half-hour. Well, there is nothing like patience!

"I needn't have hurried myself," said Fred once more, "these racing gentry are an uncommon long while in making their appearance certainly; but when they do start, I'll be bound they will make up for lost time. What a splitting pace they will go! Now Rapscallion. Now Whiskerandos. What fun it will be! I wonder what line of country they are to take. Through the river, I dare say, three or four times, and so to Orton, and away into the Leicestershire country; or perhaps towards the Chase. Well, there's one comfort, let them go which way they will I cannot fail to see them. Hark! there's eleven o'clock striking—eight, nine, ten, eleven," continued Fred, counting the strokes—"Eleven, *twelve.* Twelve! I must have miscounted. And yet no. I must have been here much more than an hour. What can it mean? Surely Dick Wilson could not have been right after all? That's impossible: and yet...."

Oh, Fred, Fred, you have been too sharp by half. In your fear of being over-reached

by others, you have certainly over-reached yourself!

Nothing like patience! And waiting is easy when one is rather shy of changing one's quarters. There is no good in hurrying home only to get laughed at on one's arrival.

Another hour passed away. The church clock tolled one, and the sound was not only a death knell to Fred's hopes, but it also reminded him that he was growing very hungry, and that dinner was not likely to wait for him, if his sister Caroline had anything to do with the decision.

However, there was one comfort; nobody would know where he had been, and if he made haste back to Yateshull, he might slip home without being observed, while folks were at their dinners; and he might still keep his own secret, and have his laugh at those who had been waiting all morning on Cacklequack Common.—Very clever plan this, and very cleverly, no doubt, you intended to carry it out: but oh, Fred, Fred, you may depend upon it that you are too clever by half!

He has turned his back on Black Slough,

made his way through the fields, passed through the village, entered his mother's premises the back way, and though he met half-a-dozen people or more, nobody appeared to be thinking about him. This was a great wonder to him, but so it was. However, it seemed to make matters easier to him, and he felt as if he could enter his mother's house without betraying any uneasiness. He began to whistle his usual air of "Cherry ripe."

The effect produced was as instantaneous as it was unexpected: before he had reached the door, out ran his sister Caroline, out ran Dick Wilson, out ran the slipshod girl who "helped in the house," each with their various actions and ejaculations of wonder and impatience.

"Why where in the world have you been?"

"What have you been doing?"

"Why did you hide yourself all morning?"

"How tiresome you are!"

"How sure you are to get out of the way whenever you are wanted!"

"How vexed you will be!"

These, and several other vollies of similar [redacted]*clamations,* were Fred's welcome.

"Why, what's the matter now?" he asked.

"Matter enough, I think;" said Caroline angrily, "Uncle Tom has been over from Amworth in his gig, and has taken mother back with him, and he has asked you and me to follow in the pony chaise, and we are to dine and sleep there, and there's to be a dance this evening, and we are to stay over Sunday!"

"You don't say so!" exclaimed Fred in dismay.

"Yes, I do," replied Caroline, "and dining there is out of the question, for we should be late for dinner even if we could start now; and you are not dressed, and the pony is not harnessed, and...."

"Well, I can't help it," said Fred, "how could I tell that Uncle Tom would come over?"

"Oh you're the tiresomest, vexatiousest boy I ever saw in my life," exclaimed Caroline, with more vehemence than grammar; and then she added sharply, "but what do you stand staring for, why don't you go and get ready?"

Fred was inclined to answer angrily, but he felt as if, under present circumstances, his sister would have the best of the discussion. For a moment, too, he hesitated, for he had a misgiving that perhaps, after all, he was falling into a trap, and about to be made an April fool. But a single glance shewed him that his sister was in sober, or rather angry earnest, and therefore he hastened up stairs,—to find, once more, as the reader will have anticipated, that he had been too clever by half.

In his hurry to go down stairs, in the morning, he had left his bottom drawer open, the puppy *had* entered his room, had dragged out his best clothes, *had*, O sight of sights! rumpled and torn his best waistcoat till it was not fit to be seen, and had gnawed a hole in the knee of his Sunday trowsers.

It was all Fred could do, not to cry with vexation when he made this discovery, for if there was one thing in the world which he cared about, it was his dress and personal appearance. Fred never was happy except when he was smart.

For a while Fred gazed disconsolately at

his tattered garments, but he was not destined to gaze long, for Caroline's sharp voice was heard at the foot of the stairs.

"Fred, I suppose you've fetched up the pony."

"No, I haven't," said Fred.

"You *haven't!*" retorted his sister, "my patience! heard anybody ever the like of that? Why what have you been doing then? Didn't mother send Dick to tell you that Dumpling had got out of the field?"

"Yes, but I thought he was making an April fool of me!"

"He wouldn't take the trouble," cried Caroline. "*April* fool indeed! I say fool, fool, fool, through every month in the year. That's what you are, and what you ever will be!" Then turning to Dick, "Do, please, Dick, run down and look after the pony, or we shall never get off to-day."

Fred now set to work to make himself as smart as he could, in spite of his losses. The puppy had done no harm to his best coat, and he had a good hat. So he contrived to look less shabby than he would have done if he

had been compelled to appear in his every-day clothes. But his troubles were not over.

As soon as he was dressed, he proceeded to the shed where the pony-chaise was kept, and dragged it out in order that it might be ready as soon so Dick Wilson appeared with Dumpling. He might have spared himself the trouble; for when Dick returned, he returned alone.

"Why, where's the pony, Dick? Can't you find him? Has he really strayed?"

"Oh he is safe enough in the paddock: he found his way out, and I suppose he found his way in again. At any rate there he is, but I am sorry to say he is dead lame. He can hardly limp across the field."

"You don't say so, Dick?" asked Fred in a tone of despair.

Yes I do though," replied Dick, shaking his head mournfully, "Dumpling will never reach Amworth this day!"

"How could he have injured himself?" inquired Fred.

"No difficulty in doing that," answered the other, "when he was out in the lanes by

himself, and when he was liable to be ridden by any idle fellow that might happen to pass by."

"I am sure if I had thought you were telling me truth, Dick, I would have gone after him at once."

"Ah! that's where it is, Fred; we're all sorry when sorrow is too late to be of any use."

"Well, but I think *you* might have gone and caught him up, for you *knew* he was gone astray, Dick."

"So I would, Fred, but I had no time."

"No time! why you were at home with Carry when I came in."

"Yes, Fred, I had entered the front door, about a minute before I heard you whistle at the back. I had been looking for you everywhere, almost ever since you left the house this morning.

"Indeed, why where did you go to?"

"Why, when I left you, I returned here to tell your mother that I would go, and bring Dumpling back to the paddock, but while I was talking with her, up came your uncle,

and then they sent me to search for you. So off I set to the Common, for I had seen you in that direction. I supposed that you thought I was wanting to make an April fool of you, when I told you that the steeple-chase was put off, and that you determined to judge for yourself. Well, I found nobody there but a few of the little boys, who did not know that the fun was not to take place, and whom I, therefore, saved from a long waiting and disappointment."

Oh Fred, Fred, so cross were the fates this day, that even the poor satisfaction of making April fools of the little ones was denied you!

Dick made a long pause at the end of his last speech, expecting that Fred would say where he had been. But Fred only fidgetted about, and looked awkward, and twisted a button of his waistcoat: so at last Dick said, "And now do tell me where you were."

Fred coloured and hesitated, and at last said, "Why I was told that the meet was to be at Black Slough, and so, by way of a bit of fun, as it was the first of April, I thought *to send* you all to the wrong place, and told *you to go to* the Common."

"Oh you did, did you," cried Caroline, who had come up time enough to hear Fred's confession, and who was in a very ill-temper at learning that the horse was too lame to take her to Amworth,—"Oh you did, did you? A nice bit of fun you have made of it this day! I wonder who's the April fool now. 'Leave me alone for shrewdness,' eh? 'I believe I *am* cute,' eh?—This is the gentleman that told us last night, that his mother never knew which was sharpest, he, or the frost, or the Whitechapel needles. Yes, you've shewn yourself sharp, haven't you?" 'Leave me alone for finding things out.' 'I should like to see anybody overreach *me*.' Those *were* nice speeches weren't they?"

But we will not follow this voluble and very disagreeable young woman through the rest of her taunts and sarcasms.

Her brother had plenty of faults which needed correction, but nobody was, or ever will be, mended by mockery and unkindness. Fred turned from her in disgust, and left her to walk to Amworth with the slipslop helper, while he set off to open his sorrows to Harry

Martin, in whom he knew he should find a kind and judicious friend.

What passed between them, this history telleth not; except in so far as this, that if Fred felt vexed and sorry for what he had done, he was as yet too proud to confess it to his cross-grained sister: but that he *did* feel sorry, and that, on better grounds than because his vanity had been hurt, and because he had contrived to over-reach himself, I am very much inclined to believe, for I have his own authority for saying, that since that day he has never attempted to make any one an *April Fool.*

THE END.

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